AYTAPKEIA
OR THE
ART
OF DIVINE
CONTENTMENT.

BY

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LONDON.

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Godlineſs with Contentment is great gain. 1 Tim. 6. 6.
Κόφας φερειν χρὴ θνητὸν ὄντα συμφορᾶς. Eurip.
Beatus eſt qui ſuis contentus eſt. Sen.

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THE EPISTLE TO THE READER.

Christian Reader,

HAving seriously considered the great dishonours done to Almighty God (as well as the prejudice which doth accrue to our own selves, by the sin of discontent (a Catholick and Epidemical sin *), it did at first put me upon the study of this subject. Nor is it incongruous to handle this next in order to the *Christian Charter*. I shewed you *there* the great things which a Believer hath in reversion, *Things to come are his*: And here, behold a Christians holy and gracious deportment in this

* *In statu maxime querulo & mœroso positi sumus.* Sen.

life, which discovers it self in nothing more eminently than in *Contentation*. Discontent is to the soul, as a disease to the body †; it puts it out of temper, and doth much hinder its regular and sublime motions heaven-ward. Discontent is hereditary, and no doubt but it is much augmented by the many sad eclipses and changes that have fallen out of late in the Body Politick; yet the disease is not to be pleaded for, because natural; but to be resisted, because sinful. That which should make us out of love with this sullen distemper, is the contemplating the beautiful Queen of *Contentment* †. For my part, I know not any ornament in Religion that doth more bespangle a Christian, or glitter in the eye of God and Man, than this of contentment: Nor certainly is there any thing wherein all the Christian Virtues do work more harmoniously, or shine more transparently, than in this Orb. Every Grace doth act its part here, and help to keep the Soul in its εὐκρασία: This is the true Philosophers stone, which turns all into gold: This is the curious enamel and embroidery of the heart, which makes Christs Spouse all *glorious* within.

† *Est animi ægritudo.* Cic. Tusc.

† *Contraria juxta se posita, &c.*

in. How should every Christian be ambitious to wear such a sparkling Diamond! If there be a blessed life before we come at Heaven, it is the contented life. And why not contented? *Why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance fallen* *? Man of all Creatures, hath the least cause to be discontented. Canst thou deserve any thing from God? doth he owe thee any thing? What if the Scene turn, and God puts thee under the *Black-Rod?* Whereas he useth a Rod, he might use a Scorpion; he might as well damn thee, as whip thee: Why then art thou so querulous? why dost thou give way to this irrational and unthankful sin of discontent?. The good Lord humble his own people from nourishing such a Viper in their breast, as doth not only cut out the bowels of their comfort; but spits venome in the face of God himself. O Christian, who art overspread with this *fretting leprosie*, thou carriest the *man of sin* about thee; for thou settest thy self above God; and as if thou wert wiser than he, wouldst fancily prescribe him what condition is best for thee. O this *devil of discontent*, which whomsoever it possesseth,

* Gen. 4

it makes his heart a little Hell *! I know there will not be perfect contentment here in this life *, ἀχ ὅσιφ πάντ' ἀνὴρ εὐδαίμονεῖ. Perfect pleasure is only at *Gods right hand* *; yet we may begin here to tune our Instrument, before we play the sweet lesson of contentment exactly in Heaven. I should be glad if this little piece might be like *Moses* his casting the tree into the waters *, to make the uncouth bitter condition of life more sweet and pleasant to drink of. I have once more adventured into the publick; *this* I acknowledge to be *rudi Minervâ*; home-spun; some better hand might have made a more curious draught: but having preached upon the subject, I was earnestly solicited by some of my Hearers to publish it; and although it is not dreſt in that rich attire of eloquence as it might, yet I am not about Poetry or Oratory, but Divinity; nor is this intended for fancy, but Practice. If I may herein do any service, or cast but a mite into the Treasury of the Churches Grace, I have my desire. The end of our living is to live to God, and to lift up his Name in the word *. The Lord add an effectual blessing to this work, and

ταρατ-
ν, exin.
ρεταρος.
Amplissi-
quaque
titia sub-
quæpiam
l parva
rimo-
a, Luc.
ul. Flo-
d. l. 2.
Ps. 16. 11.
Exod.
5. 25.

Nihil tur-
us est
m gran-
natu se-
qui nul-
alind
et argu-
tum quo
ter se diu
isse,
ter æta-
Seneca
Tran-
l.

and faſten it as a nail in a ſure place: He of his mercy make it as ſpiritual Phyſick, to purge the ill humour of diſcontent out of our hearts, that ſo a Crown of honour may be ſet upon the head of Religion, and the cryſtal ſtreams of Joy and Peace may ever run in our Souls: which is the Prayer of him who is deſirous to be a faithful Orator for thee at the Throne of Grace,

From my Study at *Stephens Walbrook*, May 5. 1653.

Thomas Watſon.

TO THE
Christian Reader.

A Word ſpoken in due ſeaſon, how good is it *! *As God* giveth to his Creatures their meat in ſeaſon *, ſo his faithful Stewards provide for his houſhold their portion of meat in due ſeaſon *. *And as it is with corporal food, the ſeaſon addeth much both to the value and uſefulneſs thereof; in like manner it is with food ſpiritual: In this regard the brokenneſs of theſe times (wherein the boſoms of moſt people are filled with diſquiets, and their mouths with murmurings) may well render this Treatiſe the more acceptable. The Seas are not ſo ſtormy as mens ſpirits are tempeſtuous, toſſed to and fro with diſcontents. And now the Lord* (who maketh every thing beautiful in his time) *hath moſt opportunely put into thy hand a profitable diſcourſe to calm unquiet hearts.* Adam *in Paradiſe daſhed upon the Rock of diſcon-*

* Prov. 15. 13.
* Pſal. 104. 27.
* Luk. 12. 42.
Eccl. 3. 11.

tent (which some Divines conceive was his first sin.) This, with many instances more in Scripture, together with our own sad experience, doth both speak our danger and call for caution. Now godliness *is the only soveraign antidote against this spreading disease; and Gods* grace *alone (being setled and exercised in the heart) can*
Heb. 13. 9. *cause steadiness in stormy times* *. *Whereas,* contentation ariseth either from the fruition of all comforts, or from a not
Dr. *Hall.* desiring of some which we have not *. *True piety doth put a Christian into such a condition: Hereby we both possess God, and are taught how to improve him, who is*
Psal. 16. 5, 26. *the only satisfying everlasting portion of his*
Mat. 8. 20 *people* *. *Herein Christ (though poor in*
Psal. 73. 6. *this world) greatly rejoyced,* The Lord is the portion of my inheritance, the lines are fallen unto me in pleasant
Ibi bene fe potest sine te? places; yea, I have a goodly heritage: *Upon this account also* Jacob *said* I have
Or male fe potest cum te? enough *; *or, as it is in the original,* I have all, *God the Father and Christ his Son had*
Gen. 33. 1. *sweet satisfaction in each other, when there*
Prov. 8. 30, 31. *was no other Being* *; *therefore such who*
1 Pet. 5. 10. *possess and improve God through Christ, cannot possibly be dissatisfied. The Al-*
2 Cor. 1. 4. *mighty is the God of* all grace *of* all
Ps. 68. 20. comforts *, *and of* salvations *; *which*

respect

respect neither deficiencies or disappointments, losses or crosses, can cause disquieting discontents in that bosom where Faith is Commander in chief. The Prophet Habakkuk *rejoyced in the* God of his salvation, *when* the pestilence went before him †, and burning coals came forth of his feet, *and when he supposed all creature-succours, both for delight and necessity, to be quite removed. This, this is the life which Christians should endeavour, and may attain by the vigorous regular actings of precious faith. This is the gain of Contentment, which comes in by godliness, when providences are black and likely to be bloody, now,* the just shall live by his faith †. *That speech of learned Mr.* Gataker *is weighty, and well worth the marking,* A contented mind argues a religious heart, and a discontented mind argues an irreligious heart. *And that worthy Divine Mr.* Greenham *was bold to say,* They never felt Gods love, or tasted forgiveness of sins, who are discontented. *This likewise was an holy breathing of Reverend Dr.* Hall *in his Meditations;* I have somewhat of the best things; I will with thankfulness enjoy them, and will want the rest with contentment. *By attaining and maintaining this frame of heart,*

† Heb. 3. 5. 17. 11.

† Hab. 2. 4. Heb. 10. 3.

heart, we might have much of heaven on this side heaven. Holy contentment maketh them truly rich, whom the oppressing world maketh very poor †. Hereby our sweetest morsels shall be well seasoned, and our bitterest potions well sweetned ‡. Had we learn'd to enjoy contentment in Jehovah, who is immutable and all-sufficient, this heavenly frame of spirit should never perish or change in the midst of the most amazing alterations in Church and State with which his Majesty is pleased to exercise us: whereas, because we live alone upon sublunaries; therefore we are apt with Nabal to die upon the nest ‡, through dejectedness, upon the approach of Imagined danger. When God seeth cause to cut us short of many creature accommodations, Faith will moderate our desires after them, assuring the soul that nothing is withdrawn or with-held which might be really advantagious: and doubtless it is a great piece of happiness upon earth, not to long after that which the Lord is pleased to deny. Indeed men act rather like Heathens than Christians when they fret upon some particular inferiour disappointments, notwithstanding Gods liberality laid forth upon them in many other respects: As Alexander the Monarch of the world was discontented,

† Dives est qui suâ sorte gaudet; animus est potissimum qui divites facit. *Sen.*

‡ Pro. 17. 1. Nihil tam acerbum est, in quo non æquus animus solatium inveniat. *Idem.*

‡ 1 Sam. 25. 37.

Beatus est qui quæ non habet, non cupit. *Aug.*

Omnia habet, qui nihil concupiscit. *Idem.*

tented, because Ivy would not grow in his gardens at Babylon. Diogenes *the Cynick was herein more wise, who finding a Mouse in his Sachel, said,* He saw that himself was not so poor, but some were glad of his leavings. *Oh how might we (if we had hearts to improve higher providences) rock our peevish spirits quiet by much stronger arguments! Let us then lay before our eyes the practices of pious men, recorded in Scripture for our imitation, as* Jacob, Agur, Paul, *&c.* † *and let us charge home upon our consciences divine exhortations, backed with strong reasons, and encouraged with sweet promises. It was the grave counsel of holy* Greenham, Having food and raiment, take the rest as an over-plus. *Are we not less than the least of Gods mercies? Is not God our bountiful benefactor? Why then do we not rest contented with his liberal allowance? Oh let us chide our wrangling spirits, and encourage confidence with contentment in God, as blessed* David *did.* *My Pen hath out-run my purpose when I undertook this Preface; but I will no longer (good Reader) detain thee in the Porch, wherein I have designed to quicken and to prepare thee to the more fruitful improvement of this seasonable useful*

† Gen. 28. 20.
Prov. 30. 8.
1 Tim. 6. 7.
Gen. 32. 10
Psal. 43. 5.

ful Treatise, wherein the Author hath exercised to good purpose both the Christian graces and Ministerial gifts with which God hath enriched him. Herein the Doctrine of Christian Contentment is clearly illustrated and profitably applied, the special cases (wherein through change of providences discontents are most commonly occasioned) are particularized, and preservatives applied to secure the soul. Although some other worthy Divines have been helpful to the Church of God by their discourses upon this subject; yet there is much of peculiar use in this Treatise. The Apostle tells us that some manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal*. *Thy soul-profit is propounded as the Authors end in publishing this Piece: and that this end may be accomplished, is the unfeigned desire and hearty prayer of him, who is*

* 1 Cor. 12. 7.

Thy Servant in and for Christ,

May 3. 1653.

Simeon Ashe.

THE

The Art of Divine Contentment.

CHAP. I.

The Introduction to the Text.

Phil. 4. 11.

I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.

THese words are brought in by way of *Prolepsis*, to anticipate and prevent an Objection. The Apostle had in the former Verses laid down many

many grave and heavenly Exhortations; among the rest, to be *careful for nothing*, Vers. 6. Not to exclude, 1. *A Prudential care* †: For *He that provideth not for his own house hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an Infidel.* Nor 2. *A Religious care*: For, we must give all *diligence to make our Calling and Election sure* †. But 3. to exclude all † *anxious care* about the issues and events of things; *Take no thought for your life, what you shall eat* †; and in this sense it should be a Christians care not to be careful. The word in the Greek [*Careful*] comes from a Primitive, * that signifies, *To cut the heart in pieces*; a soul dividing Care; take heed of this. We are bid to *commit* † *our way unto the Lord*: the Hebrew word is, *Roll* † *thy way upon the Lord.* It is our work to cast care †, and it is Gods work to take care. By our immoderacy we take his work out of his hand.

† *Neque enim prohibetur, quod homo de rebus in posterum necessariis non solicitetur.* Aquin. in Heb. 13. 1 Tim 5. 8.

† 2 Pet. 1. 10.

† *Jubet Apostolus, ut deponatur anxia cura quod illa non nisi ex infidelitate proficiscatur.* Zanch.

† Mat. 6. 25.

* Dicitur μεριμνᾶν παρὰ τὸ μερίζειν τὴν νοῦν.

† Psal. 37. 5.

† גול אל יהוה דרכך

†1 Pet. 5. 7.

Care

Care when it is *excentrick*, either distrustful, or distracting, is very dishonourable to God; it takes away his providence, as if he sate in heaven, and minded not what became of things here below, like a man that makes a Clock, and then leaves it to go of it self. Immoderate care takes the heart off from better things; and usually while we are thinking how we shall do to live, we forget how to die. *Curis tabescimus omnes.* ——Care is a spiritual Canker; that doth waste and dispirit; *& cui bono?* we may sooner by our care add a *furlong* to our grief, than a *cubit* to our comfort. God doth threaten it as a curse, *They shall eat their bread with carefulness* †: better fast, than eat of that bread. *Be careful for nothing.*

† Ezek. 12. 19.

Now lest any one should say, yea, *Paul*, thou preachest that to us which thou hast scarce learned thy self; Hast thou learned not to be careful? The Apostle seems tacitely to answer that, in the words of the Text; *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Egregia

Egregia Sententia! A ſpeech worthy to be engraven upon our hearts, and to be written in letters of Gold upon the Crowns and Diadems of Princes. The Text doth branch it ſelf into theſe two general Parts.

I. The Scholar, *Paul: I have learned.*

II. The Leſſon: *In every ſtate to be content.*

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The first branch of the Text, The Scholar; *with the first Proposition.*

I Begin with the first. 1. The Scholar, and his proficiency; *I have learned*: Out of which I shall *in transitu* observe two things by way of paraphrase.

1. It is not ἤκουσα but ἔμαθον. The Apostle doth not say, I have *heard*, that in every state I should be content; but, I have *learned*; Whence *Doct.* 1. *It is not enough for Christians to hear their Duty, but they must learn their duty.*

1. *Observ.* ἔμαθον, it is a practick word.

Doctr. 1.

It is one thing to hear, and another thing to learn; as it is one thing to eat, and another thing to concoct. St. *Paul* was a Practitioner. Christians hear much, but it is to be feared, learn little. There were

were four ſorts of ground in the Parable †, and but one good ground. An emblem of this truth; many *Hearers*, but few *Learners*. There are two things which keep us from learning.

Luk. 8. 5.

1. *Slighting what we hear.* Christ is the *Pearl of price*: when we disesteem this Pearl, we ſhall never learn, either its value, or its vertue. The Goſpel is a rare Myſtery; in one place it is called the † *Goſpel of Grace*; in another, † the *Goſpel of Glory*, becauſe in it, as in a tranſparent Glaſs, the Glory of God is reſplendent: But, he that hath learned to contemn this Myſtery, will hardly ever learn to obey it. He that looks upon the things of Heaven, as things by the by, and perhaps the driving of a trade or carrying on ſome Politick deſign, to be of greater importance, this man is in the high-road to damnation, and will hardly ever learn the things of his peace; who will learn that which he thinks is ſcarce worth learning?

† τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς χάριτος. Acts 20. 24.

† τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τῆς δόξης. 1 Cor. 4. 4.

2.

2. *Forgetting what we hear* †. If a Scholar have his Rules laid before him, and he forgets them as fast as he reads them, he will never learn. *Aristotle* calls the Memory, the *Scribe* of the Soul; and *Bernard* calls it the *Stomach* of the Soul, because it hath a retentive faculty, and turns heavenly food into blood and spirits. We have great memories in other things; we remember that which is *vain*. *Cyrus* could remember the name of every Souldier in his huge Army; we remember *injuries* †. This is to fill a precious Cabinet with dung, but, *quàm facilis oblivio boni?* as *Hierom* saith, how soon do we forget the sacred truths of God? We are apt to forget three things; our *faults*, our *friends*, our *instructions*. Many Christians are like Sieves; put a Sieve into the water, and it is full; but take it forth of the water, and all runs out: So, while they are hearing of a Sermon, they remember something; but *take the Sieve out of the water*, assoon as they are gone out of the Church, all is forgotten. *Let these sayings* (saith Christ) *sink down into your ears* †;

2. *Tantum scimus quantum in memoria tenemus.* Plato in Timão.

† Jam. 1. 25.

† *Scribit in marmore Iesus.* Cic. l. 2. de orat.

† Luk. 9. 44. † θέσθε ὑμεῖς.

ears †; in the original it is *these sayings into your ears* †. A man that would hide a jewel from being stollen, locks it up safe in his chest. *Let them sink*; The word must not only fall as the dew that wets the leaf, but as rain which soaks to the root of the tree, and makes it fructifie. Oh how often doth Satan, that fowl of the Air, pick up the good seed that is sown!

use. Tryal.

Use. Let me put you upon a serious tryal; Some of you have heard much; you have lived forty, fifty, sixty years under the blessed Trumpet of the Gospel: What have you learned? You may have heard a thousand Sermons, and yet not learned one: Search your consciences.

1. You have heard much against sin: Are you *Hearers*, or are you *Scholars*?

How many Sermons have you heard against *Covetousness*; That it is the *root* on which Pride, Idolatry, Treason do grow †? one calls it a † Metropolitan sin: It is *Malum complexum*, it doth twist a great many

† 2 Tim. 2. 4.

† Μητρόπολιν πάσης κακίας.

many sins in with it. There is hardly any sin but Covetousness is main ingredient into it; and yet re you like the two daughters of he Horse-leech, which cry, *give*, *ive*.

How much have you heard against *ash anger*; That it is a short phrenie †, a dry drunkenness; that it rests n the *bosom of fools* †? and pon the least occasion do our spirits † begin to take re? How much have you eard against *Swearing*? It Christs express mandate, *wear not at all* †, this sin f all other may be term'd the *unruitful work of darkness* †; It is neiher sweetned with pleasure, nor nriched with profit (the usual verhilion wherewith Satan doth paint m.) Swearing is forbidden with a *ub pœna*. While the Swearer shoots his Oaths, like *flying arrows*, at God, to pierce his glory, God hoots a *flying Roll* of † curses aainst him: and do you make your ongue a *Racket*, by which you toss aths as Tennis-balls? Do you ort your selves with Oaths, as the

† *Ira est brevis insania.* Sen.

† *Quid prodest vinum non bibere, & ira inebriari?* Hier. Eccl. 7. 9.

† *Magnoque irarum fluctuat æstu.* Virg.

† Mat. 5. 34.

† Eph. 5. 11.

† Zach. 5. 3. 4.

the Philistines did with *Sampson* which will at last pull the hous about your ears? Alas! how hav they learned what sin is, that hav not yet learned to leave sin? dot he know what a Viper is, that play with it?

2. You have heard much of Christ have you learned Christ? The Je (as one saith) carried Christ i their *Bibles*, but not in their *heart* † Their sound *went into all the earth* † *Rom.* 10. 18. The Prophets an Apostles were as Trumpets, whos sound went abroad into the world yet many thousands who heard th noise of these Trumpets, had no learned Christ; *They have not all obey ed*, ver. 16 †.

† Hierom.
† Rom. 10. 18.

1. A man may know much of Christ and yet not learn Christ. The *Devi* knew Christ †.

† Ἀλλ' οὐ πάντες ὑπήκουσαν.

2. A man may preach Christ, an yet not learn Christ; as *Judas*, an the pseudo-Apostles †.

† Mat. 1. 24.
† Phil. 5. 15.

3. A man may profess Christ, an yet not learn Christ. There are ma Professors in the world that Christ w profess against †.

† Mat. 7. 22, 23.

Que

Quest. What is it then to learn Christ? *Quest.*

Answ. 1. To learn Christ, is to be *made like Christ*, when the divine characters of his holiness are engraven upon our hearts; *We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image* *: There is a Metamorphosis made: A sinner viewing Christs Image in the Glass of the Gospel, is transformed into that Image. Never did any man look upon Christ with a spiritual eye, but went away quite changed. A true Saint is a divine Land-skip or Picture, where all the rare beauties of Christ are lively pourtrayed and drawn forth: He hath the same Spirit, the same Judgment, the same Will with Jesus Christ. *Answ.* 1. * 2 Cor. 18. μεταμορφούμεθα.

2. To learn Christ, is to *believe* in him; *My Lord, my God*: When we do not only *credere Deum*, but *in Deum*; which is the actual application of Christ to our selves, and as it were the spreading of the Sacred medicine of his blood upon our Soul. You that have heard much of Christ, and yet cannot with an humble adherence say, *My Jesus*; be not offended if I tell you, the Devil can say his Creed as well as you. Joh. 20. 28.

3. To learn Christ, is to *live Christ*. When we have Bible-conversations, our Lives as rich Diamonds cast a sparkling lustre in the Church of God *, and are (in some sense) parallel with the life of Christ, as the transcript with the Original. So much for the first notion of the word.

Phil. 1. 27.

CHAP. III.

Containing the Second Proposition.

II. *Observ.* Μαθον is a word imports difficulty.

II. THis word ἔμαθον, *I have learned*, is a word imports difficulty; it shews how hardly the Apostle came by his contentment of mind; it was not *natura gentium*, S. *Paul* did not come naturally by it, but he had learned it *. It cost him many a Prayer and tear; it was taught him by the Spirit.

* Ἔμαθον significat hanc rem se disciplinae, & exercitationis, & se divinitus doctum esse. Estius in loc. Beza.

* Non ex revelatione, aut ex libris didicit, sed ex longo rerum usu, & gratia Christi per spiritum residente. Zanchy.

Whence,

Whence, *Doct.* 2. *Good things are hard to come by.* The business of Religion is not so facile as most do imagine: *I have learned*, saith S. *Paul* *. Indeed you need not learn a man to sin, this is natural †, and therefore facile, it comes as water out of a Spring. 'Tis an easy thing to be wicked; Hell will be taken without storm *, but matter of Religion must be learned. To cut the flesh is easy; but to prick a Vein, and not to cut an Artery is hard. The trade of sin needs not to be learned, but the *Art of Divine Contentment* is not atchieved without holy industry; ἔμαθον, *I have learned.*

Doct. 2.

* Ἄρα διδασκαλίας τὸ πρᾶγμα γυμνασίας καὶ μελέτης, καὶ οὐκ εὐκατόρθωτον ἐστιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ σφόδρα δύσκολον καὶ κόπου. Chrysost.

* Psal. 58

* *Facilis descensus Averni.*

There are two pregnant reasons why there must be so much study and exercitation.

1. Because spiritual things are against nature. Every thing in Religion is antipodes to Nature. There are in Religion two things, *Credenda*, & *Facienda*, and both are against Nature. 1. *Credenda*, Matters of Faith. As, for a man to be justified by the righteousness of another; to become a fool that he may be wise; to save all by losing all; this

1. *Contra naturam.*

1. *Credenda.*

Facienda.

this is *against nature.* 2. *Facienda*, Matters of *Practice.* As, 1. *Self-denial*; for a man to deny his own *wisdom*, and see himself blind; his own *will*, and have it melted into the Will of God; plucking out the right eye, beheading and crucifying that sin, which is the *favorite*, and lies nearest to the heart *; For a man to be dead to the world; and in the midst of want to abound; For a man to take up the Cross, and follow Christ, not only in golden, but bloody paths; to embrace Religion when it is dressed in its night-clothes, all the Jewels of honour and preferment being pulled off; this is *against nature*, and therefore must be learned. 2. *Self examination*; For a man to take his heart (as a Watch) all in pieces; to set up a spiritual inquisition, or Court of Conscience, and traverse things in his own soul; to take *David*'s Candle and Lanthorn *, and search for sin; nay as Judge to pass sentence upon himself *, this is *against nature*, and will not easily be attained to without learning. 3. *Self-reformation.* To see a man as *Caleb*, of *another spirit*, walking antipodes to himself, the current of his life altered, and running into the channel of Religion; this is wholly *against*

Peccatum & deliciis.

er.

Malumus vitium excusare, quam excutere. Sen.

* Psal. 119. 105.

* 2 Sam. 24. 17.

Me me, adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum.

against nature. When a ſtone aſcends, it is not a natural motion, but a violent; the motion of the ſoul heaven-ward is a violent motion, it muſt be learned, fleſh and blood is not skill'd in theſe things: Nature can no more caſt out Nature, than Satan can caſt out Satan.

2. Becauſe ſpiritual things are *above nature.* There are ſome things *in nature*, that are hard to find out, as the cauſes of things, which are not learnt without ſtudy: *Ariſtotle*, (a great Philoſopher) whom ſome have called an Eagle fallen from the clouds; yet could not find out the motion of the river *Euripus*, therefore threw himſelf into it, what then are divine things, which are in a ſphere above nature, and beyond all humane diſquiſition? as the Trinity, the hypoſtatical Union; the myſtery of faith, to believe againſt hope; only Gods Spirit can light our Candle here. The Apoſtle calls theſe *the deep things of God* *. The Goſpel is full of Jewels, but they are lock'd up from ſenſe and reaſon. The Angels in Heaven are ſearching into theſe ſacred depths *.

2. *Supra naturam.*

* Τὰ βάθη τοῦ Θεοῦ. 1 Cor. 2. 10

* 1 Pet. 1. 12

Uſe. Let us beg the ſpirit of God to teach us, we muſt be *divinitus edocti*: The Eunuch could read, but he could

Uſe.

not understand, till *Philip joyned himself*
Act.8.29. *to his Chariot* *. Gods Spirit must joyn himself to our Chariot; he must teach, or we cannot learn: *All thy children shall*
Isa.53.13. *be taught of the Lord* *. A man may read the figure on the Dial, but he cannot tell how the day goes, unless the Sun shine upon the Dial; we may read the Bible over, but we cannot learn to purpose till the Spirit of God *shine into our*
2Cor.4.6. *hearts* *. Oh! implore this blessed Spirit, it is Gods Prerogative-Royal to teach. *I am the Lord thy God, that teach-*
Isa.8. 17. *eth thee to profit* *. Ministers may *tell* us our lesson, God only can *teach us*; We have lost both our hearing and eyesight; therefore are very unfit to learn. Ever since *Eve* listned to the Serpent, we have been deaf; and since she looked on the tree of Knowledge, we have been blind: but when God comes to teach, He re-
Isa. 35.5. Eph.2.17. moves these impediments *. We are naturally dead *, who will go about to teach a dead man? Yet behold, God undertakes to make dead men to understand mysteries! God is the grand Teacher. This is the reason the word preached works so differently upon men: two in a Pew, the one is wrought upon effectually, the other lies at the Ordi-

nances

nances as a dead Child at the Breast, and gets no nourishment. What is the reason? because the Heavenly gale of the spirit blows upon one, and not upon the other; One hath *the anointing of God which teacheth him all things* *, the other hath it not. Gods Spirit speaks sweetly but irresistibly. In that heavenly doxology, none could sing the new song, but those who were *sealed in their forehead* *, reprobates could not sing it †. Those that are skilful in the Mysteries of Salvation, must have the seal of the Spirit upon them. Let us make this our prayer, *Lord, breathe thy Spirit into thy Word*; and we have a promise which may add wings to prayer, *If* * *ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts to your Children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give his spirit to them that ask him*?

And thus much for the first part of the Text, The *Scholar*; which I intended only as a short gloss or paraphrase.

* 1 John 2. 27.

* Rev. 1 2.

† *Novum Canticum reprobi discere non possunt.* Paræus.

* Luk. 11 13.

CHAP. IV.

The second branch of the Text, The Lesson *it self; with the proposition.*

II. II. I Come now to the second, which is the main thing, *The Lesson* it self; *in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

Here was a rare piece of learning indeed, and certainly more to be wondred at in St. *Paul*, that he knew how to turn himself to every condition, than all the learning in the world besides, which hath been so applauded in former ages by *Julius Cæsar*, *Ptolomy*, *Xenophon*, the great admirers of Learning.

The Text hath but few words in it, *In every state be content*: But if that be true which once *Fulgentius* said, That the most golden Sentence is ever measured by *brevity* and *suavity*, then this is a most accomplished Speech; here is *magnum in parvo*. The Text is like a pretious Jewel, little in *quantity*, but great in *worth* and *value*.

The

The main Proposition I shall insist upon is this, *that a gracious spirit is a contented spirit.* The Doctrine of Contentment is very superlative; and till we have learned this, we have not learned to be Christians. *Doctr.*

1. It is an *hard Lesson.* The Angels in Heaven had not learned it; they were not contented: Though their estate was very glorious, yet they were still soaring aloft, and aimed at something higher, *Jud. ver.* 6. *The Angels which kept not their first estate,* they kept not their estate, because they were not contented with their estate. Our first Parents clo ath'd with the white robe of Innocency in Paradise, had not learned to be content; they had aspiring hearts, and thinking their humane nature too low and homespun, would be crowned with the Deity, and be *as Gods*: Though they had the *choice of all the trees in the Garden, yet none would content them but the *tree of Knowledge,* which they supposed would have been as eye-salve to have made them omniscient. Oh then! if this Lesson were so hard to * learn *in innocency,* how hard shall we find it *, who are clogged with corruption? *Gen. 3.

* *Ars omnino mira & difficilis quæ toto cordis adnisu discenda est.* Greg. hom. 16 in Ezech.

2. It is of *universal extent*, concerns all.

1. It concerns *Rich men.* One would think it needless to press those to Contentment, whom God hath blessed with great estates, but rather perswade them to be humble and thankful; nay but I say, *be content.* Rich men have their discontents as well as others, as appears,

1. When they have a great estate, yet they are discontented that they have no more; they would make the hundred Talents a thousand. A man in Wine, the more he drinks, the more he thirsts: Covetousness is a dry dropsie: an earthly heart is like the *grave* (*that is never satisfied* †. Therefore I say to you rich men, *Be content.*

2. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their estates (which is very seldom) yet, though they have *estate* enough, they have not *honour* enough *; If their *Barns* are full enough, yet there *Turrets* are not high enough. They would be some body in the world, as *Theudas* who *boasted himself to be some body* †; they never go so cheerfully, as when the wind of honour and applause fills their sails; if this wind be down, they are discontented. One would think *Haman* had as much as his proud heart could

† *Sicut hydropicus, Quo plus bibit potæ, plus sitiunt aquæ.* Hyperius.

* Prov. 30. 16.

ἐν ἐυδοξίαν ἑαυτὸν γεγέναι.

† Acts 5. 36.

could desire; he was set above all the Princes, advanced upon the pinacle of honour to be the second man in the Kingdom †; yet in the midst of all his pomp, because *Mordecai* would not uncover and kneel, he is discontented, *verse* 2. and full of wrath, *verse* 5. and there is no way to allwage this pleurisie of revenge, but by letting all the Jews blood, and offering them up in sacrifice. The itch of honour is seldom allayed without blood; therefore I say to you rich men, *Be content.* Esth. 3.

3. Rich men, if we may suppose them to be content with their honour and magnificent titles, yet they have not alwayes contentment in their *relations*. She that lies in the bosom, may sometimes blow the coals, as *Job*'s Wife, who in a pet would have him fall out with God himself, *Curse God and die.* Sometimes children cause discontent; how often is it seen that the Mothers milk doth nourish a Viper? and he that once suck'd her breast, goes about to suck her blood? Parents do often of *Grapes* gather Thorns, and of *Figs* Thistles; Children are sweet briar: Like the Rose which is a fragrant flower, but, as *Basil* saith, it hath its prickles. Our relative comforts are not

all

all pure wine, but mixed; they have in them more dregs than spirits, and are like that River *Plutarch* speaks of †, where the waters in the morning run sweet, but in the evening run bitter. We have no *Charter of exemption* granted us in this life; therefore rich men had need be called upon to be contented.

† λυκύ-εον.

2. The Doctrine of Contentment concerns poor men. You that do suck so liberally from the breasts of Providence, *be content*; it is an hard Lesson, therefore it had need be set upon the sooner. How hard is it when the livelihood is even gone, a great estate boiled away almost to nothing, then to be content? The means of subsistence is in Scripture called *our life*, because it is the very sinews of life. The woman in the Gospel spent *all her living upon the Physicians* †: in the Greek it is ὅλον τὸν βίον, she spent her whole life upon the Physicians, because she spent her means by which she should live. 'Tis much when poverty hath clipped our wings, then to be content; but *difficilia pulchra*, though hard, it is excellent; and the Apostle here had learn'd *in every state to be content*.

† Luk. 8. 43.

God

God had brought Saint *Paul* into as great variety of conditions, as ever we read of any man, and yet he was content; else sure he could never have gone through it with so much chearfulness. See into what vicissitudes this blessed Apostle was cast, *we are troubled on every side* †, there was the *sadness* of his condition; but *not distressed*, there was his *content* in that condition; *We are perplexed*, there is his *affliction*; *but not in despair*, there is his *contentation*. And if we read a little further, *In afflictions* †, *in necessities*, *in distresses*, *in stripes*, *in imprisonments*, *in tumults*, *&c.* there is his trouble; and behold his content, † *as having nothing, yet possessing all things*. When the Apostle was driven out of all, yet in regard of that sweet contentment of mind (which was like musick in his Soul) he possessed all. We read a short Map or History of his sufferings. *In prisons more frequent* †, *in deaths oft*, *&c.* Yet behold the blessed frame and temper of his spirit, *I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.*

† 2 Cor. 8.

† 2 Cor. 6. 4.

† Verse 10

† 2 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25

Which way soever Providence did blow, he had such heavenly skill and dexterity; that he knew how to steer his course. For his outward estate he was indifferent,

indifferent, he could be either on the top of *Jacobs* Ladder or the bottom; he could sing either *placentia* or *lachryma*, the dirge or the antheme; he could be any thing that God would have him, *I know how to want, and how to abound*, there is a rare pattern for us to imitate. *Paul* in regard of his faith and courage, was like a Cedar, he could not be stirred; but for his outward condition, he was like a *Reed*, bending every way with the wind of Providence. When a prosperous gale did blow upon him, he could bend with that, *I know how to be full*; and when a boisterous gust of affliction did blow, he could bend in humility with that, *I know how to be hungry*. St. *Paul* was ἀνὴρ τετράγωνος, (as *Aristotle* speaks) like a *Die* that hath four squares, throw it which way you will, it falls upon a bottom: Let God throw the Apostle which way he would, he fell upon this *bottom* of Contentment. A contented spirit is like a Watch; though you carry it up and down with you, yet the spring of it is not shaken, nor the wheels out of order, but the watch keeps its perfect motion: so it was with St. *Paul*, though God had carried him into various conditions, yet he was not lift

omo quatus. rasm.

up

up with the one, nor cast down with the other. The *spring* of his heart was not broken, the *wheels* of his affection were not discovered, but kept their constant motion toward Heaven, *still content.* The Ship that lies at Anchor may sometimes be a little shaken, but never sinks; Flesh and blood may have its fears and disquiets, but grace doth check them: A Christian having cast Anchor in Heaven, his heart never sinks: a gracious spirit is a contented spirit.

This is a rare art: *Paul* did not learn it at the feet of *Gamaliel*; *I am instructed,* μεμύημαι †; *verse* 12. I am initiated into this holy Mystery: as if he had said, I have gotten the *divine art,* I have the knack of it. God must make us right Artists. If we should put some men to an Art that they are not skill'd in, how unfit would they be for it? Put a Husbandman to Limning or drawing Pictures, what strange work would he make? this is out of his sphere. Take a Limner, that is exact in laying of Colours, and put him to plough, or set him to planting and graffing of Trees, this is not his Art, he is not skill'd in it. Bid a natural man live by Faith, and when all things go cross, *Be contented*; you bid him

†Μεμύημαι. *Mysteriis initiatus sum.* Zanchy. *Sacris initiatus sum.* Ambr.

him do that he has no skill in, you may as well bid a child guide the Stern of a Ship. To live contentedly upon God in the deficiency of outward comforts, is an Art which *flesh and blood hath not revealed*: nay, many of Gods own children, who excell in some duties of Religion, when they come to this of *Contentment*, how do they bungle? they have scarce commenced Masters of this Art.

CHAP. III.

The Resolving of some Questions.

FOR the illustrating of this Doctrine I shall propound these Questions.

Quest. 1. Whether a Christian may not be sensible of his condition, and yet be contented.

Answ. Yes; for else he is not a *Saint* but a *Stoick*. *Rachel* did well to weep for her children (*there was nature*) but her fault was, she refused to be comforted (*there was discontent.*) Christ himself was *sensible* when He sweat great drops of blood and said, *Father if it be possible,*

possible, let this Cup pass from me †; *yet* he was *contented*, and sweetly submitted to his Will. *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* The Apostle bids us *humble your selves under the mighty hand of God* †, which we cannot do unless we are sensible of it. † Mat. 26. 39. † 2 Pet. 5. 6.

Quest. 2. Whether a Christian may not lay open his grievances to God, and yet be contented? *Quest.*

Answ. Yes: *Unto thee have I opened my cause*, Jer. 20. 12. † and *David poured out his complaint before the Lord* *. We may cry to God, and desire Him to write down all our injuries; Shall not the child complain to his Father? When any burden is upon the spirit, Prayer gives vent, and easeth the heart: *Hannah*'s spirit was burdened, *I am* (saies she) *a Woman of troubled spirit* †. Now, having prayed and wept, she went away, and was no more sad; only here is the difference between an holy complaint, and a discontented complaint; in the one we complain *to God*; in the other we complain *of God*. *Answ.* † Jer. 20. 12. * Ps. 143. 2. † 1 Sam. 2. 17.

Quest. 3. What is it properly that contentment doth exclude.? *Quest.*

Answ. There are three things which contentment doth banish out of its Diocess, *Answ.*

Diocess, and can by no means consist with it.

What contentment excludes. † Ps. 55. 2.

1. It excludes a *vexatious repining*; this is properly the daughter of Discontent, *I mourn in my complaint* †; he doth not say, I murmur in my complaint. Murmuring is no better than mutiny in the heart, it is a rising up against God. When the Sea is rough and unquiet, it casts forth nothing but foam; when the heart is discontented, it casts forth the foam of anger, impatience, and sometimes little better than blasphemy. Murmuring is nothing else but the scum which boyls off from a discontented heart.

2. It excludes an *uneven discomposure*. When a man saith I am in such straits that I know not how to involve or get out; I shall be undone. Head and heart are so taken up, that a man is not fit to pray, or meditate, *&c.* he is not himself: just as when an Army is routed, one man runs this way, and another that, the Army is put into disorder: So a mans thoughts run up and down distracted. Discontent doth dislocate and unjoynt the soul, it pulls off the wheels.

3. It excludes a *childish despondency*, and this is usually consequent upon the

other

other. A man being in an hurry of mind, not knowing which way to extricate or wind himself out of the present trouble, begins *succumbere oneri*, to faint and sink under. For care is to the mind as a burden to the back, it loads the Spirits, and with overloading sinks them. A despondent spirit is a discontented spirit.

CHAP. VI.

Shewing the nature of Contentment.

HAving answered these Questions, I shall in the next place come to describe this αὐτάρκεια or contentment. What contentation is.

It is a sweet temper of spirit, whereby a Christian carries himself † in an equal poize in every condition. The nature of this will appear more clear in these three Aphorisms.

† *Se æquanimiter fert.* Bede.

I. Contentment is a *divine thing*; it becomes ours not by *acquisition*, but *infusion*; it is a slip taken off from the tree of life, and planted by the Spirit of God in the Soul; it is a fruit that grows not in the Garden of Philosophy, but is of

I. *Aphorism.* Αὐτάρκεια *non acquisitione, sed infusione.*

of an heavenly birth: It is therefore very observable, that *Contentment* is joyned with Godlineſs, and goes in equipage; *But godlineſs with Contentment great gain* †. Contentment being a conſequent of Godlineſs, or concomitant, or *both*: I call it *divine*, to contradiſtinguiſh it to that Contentment which a moral man may arrive at. Heathens have ſeemed to have this Contentment, but it was only εἰκὼν τῆς ἀρετῆς, the ſhadow and picture of it; the *Beryl*, not the true *Diamond*: theirs was but *civil*, this is *ſacred*: theirs was only from Principles of *Reaſon*, this of *Religion*: theirs was only lighted at Natures Torch, this at the Lamp of Scripture. Reaſon may a little teach Contentment; as thus: Whatever my condition be, this is that I am born to, and if I meet with croſſes it is but πάντων ὀφεῖλον, a Catholick miſery; all have their ſhare, why therefore ſhould I be troubled †? Reaſon may ſuggeſt this; and indeed, this may be rather *conſtraint*, than *content*: but to live ſecurely and cheerfully upon God in the abatement of creature ſupplies, *Religion* only can bring this into the Soul's Exchequer.

† 1 Tim. 6. 6.

† *Ferre quam ſortem omnes patiuntur, nemo recuſat.*

2. *Aphoriſm.*

2. Contentment is an *intrinſecal thing*

t lies within a man; not in the Bark, but he root. Contentment hath both its ountain and Stream in the Soul. The Beam hath not its Light from the Air; he Beams of comfort which a contented nan hath, do not arise *extrinsece*, from oreign comforts, but from within. As orrow is seated in the spirit, *The heart nows its own grief* †: So Contentment ies within the Soul, and doth not depend pon externals. Hence I gather, that utward troubles cannot hinder this blessed Contentment; it is a spiritual thing nd ariseth from spiritual grounds, *viz. The Apprehension of Gods Love.* When here is a tempest without, there may be usick within: a Bee may sting through he skin, but it cannot sting to the heart: Outward afflictions cannot sting to a Christians heart, where Contentment lies. Thievesmay plunder us of our Money and Plate; but not of this Peal of Contentment, unless we are willing to part with t; for it is locked up in the *Cabinet of he heart*: The soul which is possessed of his rich treasure of Contentment, is like *Noah* in the Ark, that can sing in the midst of a Deluge.

† Prov. 14. 10.

3. Contentment is an *Habitual thing*: t shines with a fixed light in the firmament

3. *Aphorism.*

mament of the Soul. Contentment doth not appear only now and then, as some Stars which are seen but seldom: it is a settled temper of the heart. One action doth not denominate; he is not said to be a liberal man, that gives Alms once in his life; a covetous man may do so, but he is said to be liberal, that is *given to liberality* †; that is, who upon all occasions is willing to indulge the necessities of the poor: so he is said to be a contented man, that is given to contentment. It is not *casual*, but *constant*. *Aristotle* in his Rhetorick, distinguisheth between colours in the face that arise from *passion*, and those which arise from *complexion*: the pale face may look red when it bluseth; but this is only a passion: he is said properly to be ruddy and sanguine, who is constantly so, it is his complexion. He is not a contented man who is so upon an occasion, (and perhaps when he is pleased;) but who is so constantly, it is the habit and complexion of his soul.

† Rom. 12. 13.

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CHAP. VII.

Reasons pressing to Holy Contentment.

HAving opened the nature of Contentment, I come next to lay down some Reasons or Arguments to Contentment, which may preponderate with us.

The first is, *Gods Precept*: It is charged upon us as a duty; *Be content with such things as you have* *; the same God who hath bid us believe, hath bid us be content; if we obey not, we run our selves into a spiritual *præmunire*. Gods Word is a sufficient Warrant; it hath *authority* in it, and must be a *supersedeas* or *sacred spell* to discontent: *Ipse dixit* was enough among *Pythagoras* his Scholars; *Be it enacted*, is the Royal stile. Gods Words must be the star that guides, and His Will the weight that moves our obedience; His *fiat* is a Law, and hath Majesty enough in it to captivate us into obedience: our hearts must not be more unquiet than the raging Sea, which at His Word is still'd *.

Reason 1. Virtute præcepti.

* Heb. 13. 5.

*Mat. 8. 26.

2. The

Reason 2. Virtute Promissi.

2. The second Reason enforcing Co tentment, is, *Gods Promise*; for, *H hath said, I will never leave thee, nor f sake thee*, Heb. 14. 5. where God ha engaged himself under hand and seal f our necessary provisions. If a King shou say to one of his Subjects, I will take ca for thee; as long as I have any Crow Revenues thou shalt be provided for; thou art in danger, I will secure thee; in want, I will supply thee; would n that Subject be content? Behold, Go hath here made a promise to theBelieve and as it were entred into Bond for h security, *I will never leave thee*: Shall n this charm down the Devil of Disco tent? *Leave thy Fatherless Child with me, I will preserve them alive* †. M thinks I see the Godly man on his deat bed much discontented, and hear h complaining, What will become of m Wife and Children when I am dead a gone? they may come to poverty: Sa God, Trouble not thy self, *be conte* I will take care of thy Children: an *Let thy widow trust in me*. God hath ma a Promise to us, *That he will not leave* and hath entail'd the promise upon o *Wife* and *Children*; and will not t satisfie? True Faith will take Gods sing

† Jer. 49. 11.

Bo

Bond, without calling for Witnesses.

3. Be contented, *By vertue of a decree.* Whatever our condition be, God the great Umpire of the World hath *ab æterno* decreed that condition for us, and by His Providence ordered all appurtenances thereunto. Let a Christian often think with himself, who hath placed me here, whether I am in a higher state, or in a lower; not Chance or Fortune (as the purblind Heathens imagined); no, it is the wise God that hath by His Providence fixed me in this Orb; We must act that scene which God will have us: Say not, Such a one hath occasioned this to me; look not too much at the under-wheel. We read in *Ezekiel* of *a wheel within a wheel** ; Gods *Decree* is the cause of the turning of the wheels, and His *Providence* is the inner wheel that moves all the rest. Gods Providence is that πηδάλιον or Helm, which turns about the whole Ship of the Universe. Say then as holy *David*, *I was silent**, *because thou, Lord, didst it**. Gods Providence (which is nothing else but the carrying on of his Decree) should be a *supersedeas* and counterpoison against

Reason 3. Virtute Decreti.

* Ezek. 1. 16.

* נאלם סתי

* Ps. 39. 9.

gainſt diſcontent: God hath ſet us i
our ſtation, and He hath done it i
wiſdom.

We fancy ſuch a condition of lif
good for us; whereas, if we were ou
own carvers, we ſhould often cut the
worſt piece. *Lot* being put to his choice
did chuſe *Sodom* *, which ſoon after wa
burnt with fire. *Rachel* was very de
ſirous of Children, *Give me Children o
I dye* *; and it coſt her her life in bring
ing forth a Child. *Abraham* was ear
neſt for *Iſhmael, O that Iſhmael may liv
before thee* *! but he had little comfor
either of him or his Seed; he was bor
a Son of ſtrife; *His hand was againſt e
very man, and every mans hand again
him.* The Diſciples wept for Chriſt
leaving the world, they choſe his cor
poral preſence; whereas it was be
for them that Chriſt ſhould be gone
for elſe *the Comforter would not come*
David choſe the life of his child, *
wept and faſted for it *; whereas if th
child had lived, it would have been
perpetual Monument of his ſham
We ſtand oft in our own light; if w
ſhould ſort or parcel out our own com
forts, we ſhould hit upon the wron
It is not well for the Child that the P
re

* *Iſta eligimus quæ plus nocent quam placent.*
* Gen. 13. 10.
*Gen. 30. 1
* Gen. 17. 18.
*Joh. 16. 7.
* 2 Sam. 12. 16.

rent doth chuſe for it? were it left to it ſelf, it would perhaps chuſe a knife to cut its own fingers. A man in a paroxyſm calls for Wine, which if he had, it were little better than poyſon: 'Tis well for the patient that he is at the Phyſicians appointment,

The conſideration of a Decree determining, and a providence diſpoſing all things that fall out, ſhould work our hearts to holy Contentment. The wiſe God hath ordered our Condition: if he ſees it better for us to abound, we ſhall abound, if he ſees it better for us to want, we ſhall want: Be content to be at Gods diſpoſe.

God ſees in his infinite wiſdom the ſame condition is not *convenient* for all; that which is good for one, may be bad for another: One ſeaſon of weather will not ſerve all mens occaſions; one needs *Sun-ſhine*, another *Rain*: One condition of life will not fit every man, no more than one Suit of apparel will fit every body: Proſperity is not fit for all, nor yet Adverſity. If one man be brought low, perhaps he can bear it better; he hath a greater ſtock of grace, more Faith and Patience: he can *gather Grapes of Thorns*, pick ſome com-

fort out of the Croſs; every one cannot do this. Another man is ſeated in an eminent place of dignity; he is fitter for it: perhaps it is a place requires more parts and judgment, which every one is not capable of *; perhaps he can uſe his eſtate better, he hath a publick *heart* as well as a publick *place*. The wiſe God ſees that condition to be bad for one, which is good for another; hence it is he placeth men in different Orbs and Spheres, ſome higher, ſome lower: one man deſires *health*, God ſees ſickneſs better for him; God will work health out of ſickneſs, by bringing the *body of death* into a Conſumption: Another man deſires *liberty*, God ſees reſtraint better for him; He will work his liberty by reſtraint; when his feet are bound, his heart ſhall be moſt enlarged. Did we believe this, it would give check to the ſinful diſputes and cavils of our hearts: Shall I be diſcontented at that which is enacted by a Decree, and ordered by a Providence? Is this to be a Child, or a Rebel?

* Ex omni ligno non fit Mercurius.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Use 1.

Shewing how a Christian may make his life comfortable.

Use 1. Informat.

IT shews how a Christian may come to lead a comfortable life, even an Heaven upon Earth, be the times what they will; *viz.* by *Christian Contentment* *; the comfort of life doth not stand ἐν τῷ περιοσεύειν, in having much; 'tis Christs maxime, *Mans life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he doth possess* *; but it is in being contented *. Is not the Bee as well contented with the feeding on the dew, or sucking from a flower, as the Ox that grazeth on the Mountains? Contentment lies within a man, *in the heart*; and the way to be comfortable, is not by having our Barns filled, but our minds quiet.

* Prov. 15 13.

*Luke 12 15.

* *Nullæ profecto majores sunt divitiæ, quam suâ sorte contentum esse, hæc enim virtus efficit ut id quod habet aliquis, sit satis, suumque animum in paupertate reddet divitem.* Hieronymus.

et. The contented man (ſaith *Seneca*) is the happy man: Diſcontent is a fretting humour, which dries the Brains, waſtes the Spirits, corrodes and eats out the comfort of life: Diſcontent makes a man that he doth not *enjoy* what he doth *poſſeſs*. A drop or two of Vinegar will ſour a whole glaſs of Wine. Let a man have the affluence and confluence of worldly comforts, a drop or two of diſcontent will embitter and poiſon all. *Comfort* depends upon *Contentment*. *Jacob* went halting when the ſinew upon the hollow of his thigh ſhrank; ſo when the ſinew of Contentment begins to ſhrink, we go halting in our comforts. Contentation is as neceſſary to keep the life comfortable, as oyl is neceſſary to keep the lamp burning: The clouds of diſcontent do often drop the ſhowers of tears. Would we have comfort in our lives? we may have it if we will *. A Chriſtian may carve out what condition he will to himſelf *. Why doſt thou complain of thy Troubles? it is not Trouble that troubles, but Diſcontent; it is not the water without the Ship, but the Water that gets within the leak, which drowns it: It is not outward affliction that can make

Quiſque ſuæ fortunæ faber.

Quid voris opus eſt? ac te ipſe licem.

en.

make the life of a Christian sad; a contented mind would sail above these waters: but when there's a leak of discontent open, and trouble gets into the heart, then it is disquieted and sinks: Do therefore as the Mariners, pump the water out, and stop this Spiritual leak in thy soul, and no trouble can hurt thee.

CHAP. IX.

Use 2.

A check to the discontented Christian.

Use 2. HEre is a just reproof to such as are discontented with their condition. This disease is almost epidemical *. Some not content with their callings which God hath set them in, must be a step higher, from the *Plough* to the *Throne*, who like the *Spider* in the *Proverbs*, will *take hold with their hands and be in Kings Palaces*; Proverbs 30. 28. Others from the *Shop* to the *Pulpit*

Reproof.

* *Quis est tam composita fœlicitatis, ut non aliqua ex parte cum status sui qualitate rixetur?* Boetius de Consol. Philos. l. 2.

Numb. 12. 2. *Pulpit* *; they would be in the Temple of *Honour*, before they are in the Temple of *Virtue*; who step into *Moses* Chair without *Aaron's* Bells and Pomegranates; like Apes, which do most shew their deformity when they are climbing. Is it not enough that God hath bestowed gifts upon men in private to edifie, that he hath enriched them with many mercies; but, *seek they the Priest-hood also*? What is this but discontent; arising from high flown Pride? These do secretly tax the Wisdom of God, that he hath not screwed them up in their condition a peg higher. *Tentat superbia, ut frangat*; Every man is complaining that his estate is no better, though he seldom complains that his heart is no better: *Suæ quemque conditionis pœnitet:* One man commends this kind of life, another commends that *; one man thinks a Country-life best, another a City-life; as the Poet elegantly expresseth it.

* Numb. 16. 9.

August.

* *Hic utrique circumfluens vitam celibem detestet, ille captiis fœlix, orbus liberis alieno censum nutrit hæredi, alius prole lætatus, filii delectus mœstus illachrymat.* Boet.

O fortunati mercatores, gravis annis
Miles ait, multo jam fractus membra labore;
Contra,

Contrà, Mercator navim jactantibus austris,
Militia est potior, quid enim concurritur horæ
Momento? cita mors venit, aut victoria læta. Hor.

The Souldier thinks it best to be a Merchant, and the Merchant to be a souldier. Men can be content to be any thing but what God will have them. We may cry out with the same Poet.

Qui fit, Mecœnas, ut nemo quam sibi sortem,
Seu ratio dederit, seu sors objecerit, illa
Contentus vivat? laudet diversa sequentes. Hor. 1 Satyr.

How is it that no man is contented? Very few Christians have learned St. *Paul*'s lesson; neither poor nor rich know how to be content; they can learn any thing but this.

1. If men are poor, they learn to be, 1. *Envious*; they malign those that are above them; anothers prosperity is an eye-sore; when Gods Candle shines upon their neighbours Tabernacle, this light offends them:

In the midst of wants men can (in this sense) abound *viz.* in *envy* and *malice*. An *envious* eye is an evil eye. 2. They learn to be *querulous*, still complaining as if God had dealt hardly with them; they are ever telling of their wants; they want this or that comfort; whereas their greatest want is a contented spirit. Those that are well enough content with their *sins*, yet are not content with their *condition*.

2. If men are rich, they learn to be *covetous*, thirsting insatiably after the world, and by any unjust means scraping it together; *Their right hand is full of bribes*, as the Psalmist expresseth it *. Put a good Cause in one scale, and a piece of Gold in the other, and the Gold weighs heaviest. There are (saith *Solomon*) four things that say, *It is not enough* *: I may add a fifth, *viz.* the *heart of a covetous man*: So that neither poor nor rich know how to be content.

* Psal. 26. 10.

* Prov. 30. 15.

Never certainly since the Creation did this sin of discontent *reign*, or rather *rage*, more than in our times; never was God more dishonoured: you can hardly speak with any, but the passion of his tongue betrays the discontent

content of his heart; every one lisps out his trouble, and here even the stammering tongue speaks too free and fluently. If we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good look from us, but presently we are sick of discontent, and ready to die out of an humour. If God will not give the people of *Israel* for their lusts, they bid him take their lives: they must have Quails to their Manna. *Ahab*, though a King (and one would think his Crown-lands had been sufficient for him, yet) is sullen and discontented for want of *Naboths* Vineyard. *Jonah*, though a good man and a Prophet, yet ready to die in *a pet* *; and because God killed his Gourd, *Kill me too*, said he. *Rachel*, *Give me Children, or I die*: she had many blessings if she could have seen them, but wanted this of *contentation*. God will *supply our wants*, but must he satisfie our *lusts* too? Many are discontented for a very trifle; another hath a better dress, a richer Jewel, a newer fashion. *Nero* not content with his Empire, was troubled that the Musicians had more skill in playing than he: how phantastick are some, that pine away in discontent for the want

* Jonah 4. 8.

of those things, which if they had, would but render them more ridiculous?

CHAP. X.

Use III.

A Swasive to Contentment.

Use 3. Exhortation.

Use 3. IT exhorts us to labour for Contentation; this is that which doth beautifie and bespangle a Christian, and as a spiritual embroidery, doth set him off in the eyes of the world.

Object.

But methinks I hear some bitterly complaining, and saying to me, Alas! how is it possible to be contented! the Lord *hath made my Chain heavy* *, he hath cast me into a very sad condition.

*Lam. 3. 7.

Homer Iliad. 2.

Ἀλλά μοι Αἰγίοχος Κρονίδης Ζεὺς ἄλγε' ἔδωκεν,
Ὃς με μετ' ἀμφοτέροις ἔριδος καὶ νείκεα βάλλει.

Answ.

Answ. There is no sin but labours either to hide it self by some mask, or if it cannot be concealed, then to vindicate it self by some Apology.

This sin of Discontent I find very witty in its Apologies; which I shall first

first discover, and then make a Reply. We must lay it down for a Rule, That Discontent is a *sin*; so that all the Pretences and Apologies wherewith it labours to justifie it self, are but the painting and dressing of a Strumpet.

SECT. I.

The first Apology that Discontent makes, Answered.

THe first Apology which Discontent makes is this; I have lost a Child. *Paulina* upon the loss of her Children was so possessed with a spirit of sadness, that she had like to have intombed her self in her own discontent: Our love to *Relation* is oftentimes more than our love to *Religion*. 1. *Apol.*

Answ. 1. We must be content, not only when God gives mercies, but when he taketh them away. If we must *in every thing* give thanks, 1 *Thess.* 5. 18. then in nothing be discontented. 1. *Reply.*

2. Perhaps God has taken away the *Cistern*, that he may give you the more of the *Spring*; He hath darkened the Star light, that you 2. *Reply.*

may

may have more Sun-light. God intends you shall have more of himself and; is not He better than *ten Sons*? Look not so much upon a temporal loss, as a spiritual gain; the comforts of the world *run dregs*; those which come out of the Granary of the Promise are purer and sweeter.

3. *Reply.* 3. Your Child was not given, but lent: *I have*, saith *Hanna, lent my Son to the Lord**: She lent him! the Lord had but lent him to her. Mercies are not entailed upon us, but lent: What a man lends he may call for it again when he please. God hath put out a Child to thee a while to nurse, wilt thou be displeased if He takes His Child home again? O be not discontented that a Mercy is taken away from you; but rather be thankful that it was lent you so long.

* 1 Sam. 1. 28.

4. *Reply.* 4. Suppose your Child be taken from you, either he was good or bad: if he was *rebellious*, you have not so much parted with a Child as a burthen, you grieve for that which might have been a greater grief to you. If he was *Religious*, then remember, he is taken *from the evil to come**, and placed in his centre of felicity. This lower Regi-

* Is. 57. 1.

on is full of gross and hurtful vapours; how happy are those who are mounted into the Celestial Orbs! The righteous *is taken away*: in the Original it is, he is *gathered* *; a wicked Child dying is cut off, but the pious Child is gathered. Even as we see men gather flowers, and candy them, and preserve them by them; so hath God gathered thy Child as a sweet flower, that He may candy it with glory, and preserve it by him for ever. Why then should a Christian be discontented? why should he weep excessively? *Daughters of Jerusalem weep not for me; but weep for your selves* *: So, could we hear our Children speaking to us out of Heaven, they would say, weep not for us who are happy, we lie upon a soft pillow, even in the bosom of Christ; *the Prince of Peace* is embracing us, and kissing us with the kisses of His lips; be not troubled at our preferment: *Weep not for us*, but weep for your selves, who are in a sinful sorrowful world; you are in the *valley of tears*; but we are on the *Mountains of Spices*: we are gotten to our harbour, but you are still tossing upon the waves of inconstancy. O Christian, be not *discontented* that thou hast parted

* אסף

* Luke 23. 28.

parted with ſuch a Child, but rathe rejoyce that thou hadſt ſuch a Child t part with: Break forth into thankfu neſs. What an honour is it to a Paren to beget ſuch a Child, that while h lives, encreaſeth the *joy* of the glo rified Angels *; and when he dies, encreaſeth the *number* of the glorifie Saints?

* Luke 15. 10. *Lachrymæ pœnitentium ſunt vivum Angelorum.* Bern. ſer. 30. ſuper Cant.

5. *Rep'y.*

5. If God hath taken away one o your Children, He hath left you more He might have ſtripped you of all: H took away all *Job*'s comforts, his *eſtate* his *children*; and indeed his Wife wa left, but as a croſs; Satan made a Bow of this Rib (as *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaks) an ſhot a Tentation by her at *Job*, think ing to have ſhot him to the heart *Curſe God and die*, but *Job* had upon him the Breaſt-plate of *Integrity*; and though his Children were taken away yet not his graces? ſtill he is content ſtill he bleſſed God. O think how many mercies you ſtill enjoy! yet ou baſe hearts are more diſcontented a one loſs, than thankful for an hundred mercies.

God hath plucked one bunch o Grapes from you; but how many pre tious cluſters are left behind?

Object. But it was my only child, the staff of my age, the seed of my comfort, and the only blossom out of which the honour of an ancient Family did grow. *Object.*

Answ. 1. God hath promised you (if you belong to him) a name *better than of Sons and daughters* *: Is he dead that should have been the monument to have kept up the Name of a Family? God hath given you a *new name*, He hath written your name in the Book of Life; behold your spiritual Heraldry; here is a name that cannot be cut off. *Answ.* * Isa. 56. 5.

2. Hath God taken away thy *only Child?* He hath given thee His *only Son*: this is a happy exchange. What needs he complain of losses, that hath Christ? He is His Fathers *brightness* *, His *riches* *, His *delight* *. Is there enough in Christ to delight the heart of God? and is there not enough in Him to ravish us with holy delight? He is *wisdom* to teach us, *righteousness* to acquit us, *sanctification* to adorn us, He is δῶρον βασιλικὸν, that Royal and Princely gift; He is the *bread of Angels* *, the joy and triumph of Saints; He is τὰ πάντα καὶ ἐν πᾶσι, *all* Bern. * Heb. 1. 3. * Col. 2. 9. * Ps. 42. 2. * *Christus panis angelorum.*

*Col. 3. 10. *all in all* *; why then art thou discontented? though thy Child be loſt, yet thou haſt Him for whom all things are loſs.

7. *Reply.* 7. And laſtly, let us bluſh to think that Nature ſhould ſeem to out-ſtrip Grace. *Pulvillus* an Heathen, when he was about to conſecrate a Temple to *Jupiter*, and news was brought him of the death of his ſon, would not deſiſt from his enterpriſe, but with much compoſure of mind, gave order for decent burial.

Pet. Marr.

SECT. II.

The ſecond Apology Anſwered.

2. *Apol.* 2. APology that diſcontent makes is, I have a great part of my Eſtate ſtrangely melted away, and my ſtanding begins to fail.

God is pleaſed ſometimes to bring his Children very low, and cut their ſhort in their eſtate; it fares with them as with that Widow who had nothing in her houſe ſave *a pot of Oyl* *; but is content.

* 2 Kings 4. 2.

1. God hath taken away your *Estates*, but not your *portion*. This is a sacred paradox. Honour and Estate are not part of a Christians Jointure, they are rather *accessaries* than *essentials*; and are extrinsecal and foreign, therefore the loss of these cannot denominate a man miserable, still the portion remains, *The Lord is my portion, saith my soul* *. Suppose one were worth a Million of Money, and he should chance to lose a pin off his Sleve, this is no part of his Estate, nor can we say he is undone: the loss of sublunary comforts, is not so much to a Christians portion, as the loss of a pin is to a Million. *These things shall be added to you* *; *Adjicientur*, they shall be cast in as overplus: when a man buys a piece of cloth, he hath an inch or two given into the measure: now, though he lose his inch of cloth, yet he is not undone: for still the whole piece remains: our outward estate is not so much in regard of the portion, as an inch of cloth is to the whole piece; why then should a Christian be discontented, when the title to his spiritual treasure remains? a Thief may take away all my Money that I have about me, but not my Land; still a

1. *Reply.*

* Lam. 3. 24.

* Mat. 6. 22.

a Christian hath a title to the *l*
promise. *Mary* hath chosen the be
part, *which shall not be taken*
her.

2. *Reply.* † *Pecuniam perdidisti fortassis illa te perderet manens.*

2. Perhaps if thy estate had not
lost, thy soul had been lost †; outw
comforts do often quench inward he
God cannot bestow a Jewel upo
but we fall so in love with it, that
forget him that gave it; what pity
that we should commit Idolatry
the creature. God is forced someti
to drain away an estate: the Plate
Jewels are often cast over-board to
the passenger. Many a man may
the time that ever he had such
estate, it hath been an *enchantmen*
draw away his heart from God. S
there are that *will be rich* *, and
fall into a *snare* *.
thou troubled that
hath prevented a sna
Riches are *Thorns* †:
thou angry that
hath pulled away
Thorn from thee? Riches are
pared to *thick clay* †: Perhaps
affections, which are *the feet*
the soul, might have stuck so
in this golden clay, that

* 1 Tim. 6. 9.

* *Aliud est esse divitem, aliud velle fieri divitem; hic cupiditas accusatur, non aurum.* Bede.

†Mat. 13. 7. *Spinæ suffocantes & pungentes.*

†Hab. 2. 6.

uld not have ascended up to Hea-
n: *be content*, if God dam up
r outward comforts, it is that the
eam of our love may run faster ano-
r way.

3. If your estate be small, yet
d God can bless a little. 'Tis not how
ch *money* we have, but how much
ssing. He that often curseth the bags
Gold*, can bless the *meal in the Bar-*
, and the *oyl in the Cruse*. What if
ou hast not the full flesh pots? yet
ou hast a promise, *I will bless her provi-*
*, and then a little goes a great way;
content, thou hast the dew of a bles-
g distill'd: a *dinner of green herbs*, where
ve is, is sweet, I may add, where the
ve of God is. Another may have
re estate than you, but more care;
re riches, less rest; more revenues,
t withal more occasions of expence.
hath a greater inheritance, yet per-
ps God doth not give him *power to*
*thereof**, he hath the *dominion* of
estate, not the *use*; he holds more,
t enjoyes less; in a word, thou hast
s Gold than he, perhaps less guilt †.

3. *Reply.*

* *Ex male quæsitis vix gaudet tertius hæres.*

* Psal. 132. 15.

*Eccl. 6. 2.

Λεπτῶν, καλῶς ζῆν κρεῖσσον ἢ λαμπρῶς, κακῶς, Menand.

† *Lucram in arcâ, damnum in Conscientiâ.* Aug. in Serm. Intent.

4. You

4. You did never so thrive in y
spiritual trade; your heart was neve
low; and since your condition wa
low, you were never *so poor in spirit*,
ver *so rich in Faith*. You did never
the wayes of Gods *commandments* so
as since some of your golden wei
were taken off. You never had
Trading for Heaven all your life *,
is *uberimus quæstus*. You did never m
such adventures upon the promise,
since you left off your Sea-adventu
This is the best kind of Merchand
O Christian, thou never hadst such
comes of the Spirit, such springtide
joy; and what though weak in est
if strong in assurance? be content; w
you have lost one way, you have ga
another.

* *Fœlix mutatio, ubi Deum pro mundo accipimus, pro terra Cœlum.*

5. *Reply.* 5. Be your losses what they wi
this kind, remember in every loss t
is only a *suffering*: but in every dis
tent there is a *sin*, and one sin is w
than a thousand sufferings. What?
cause some of my *revenues* are gone,
I part with some of my *righteous*
shall my Faith and Patience go too?
cause I do not possess an Estate, s
not therefore possess my own spirit
learn to be content.

SEC

SECT. III.

The third Apology Answered.

THE third Apology is, It is sad with me in my relations; where I should find most comfort, there I have most grief. This Apology or Objection branceth it self into two particulars; whereto I shall give a distinct Reply. 3. *Apol.*

1. My Child goes on in Rebellon; I fear I have brought forth a Child for the Devil. It is indeed sad to think that Hell should be paved with the skulls of many of our Children: and certainly the *pangs of grief* which the Mother hath in this kind, are worse than *her pangs of travel*; but though you ought to be humbled, yet not discontented: for consider, 1. *Branch.* 1. *Reply.*

1. You may pick something out of your Childs undutifulness; the Childs sin is sometimes the Parents Sermon: *quod dolet, docet*: the undutifulness of children to us may be a *memento* to put us in mind of our *undutifulness once* to God. Time was when *we* were rebellious children; how long did our hearts stand out as Garrisons against God? how 2. *Reply.*

long

long did He parly with us, and b
seech us, ere we would yield; h
walked in the tenderness of His he
towards us, but we walked in the fro
ardness of our hearts towards Hi
and since grace hath been planted in o
souls, how much of the wild Olive
still in us? how many motions of t
Spirit do we daily resist; how many u
kindnesses and affronts have we put u
on Christ? Let this open a Spring of R
pentance; look upon your Chil
rebellion, and mourn for your own r
bellion.

2. *Reply.* 2. Though to see him undutiful
your *grief*, yet not alwayes your *s*
Hath a Parent given the Child, not o
ly the milk of the breast, but *the sinc*
milk of the Word †? Hast thou season
his tender years with Religious educ
tion? thou canst do no more; Paren
can only work knowledge: God mu
work grace; they can only lay the woo
together, it is God must make it burn
a Parent can only be a guide to shew h
Child the way to Heaven, the Spirit
God must be a Load-stone to draw h
heart into that way. *Am I in G*
stead (saith *Jacob*) *who hath withh*
the fruit of the Womb †? can I give Chi
dre

† 1 Pet. 2. 2.

† Gen. 30. 2.

dren? So, is a parent in Gods stead to give grace? Who can help it, if a Child having the light of Conscience, Scripture, Education, these three Torches in his hand, yet runs wilfully into the deep ponds of sin? Weep for thy Child, pray for him; but do not sin for him, *by discontent*.

3. Say not, you have brought forth a Child for the Devil; God can reduce him, He hath promis'd to *turn the heart of the Children to their Parents**, and to open springs of grace in the *Desart**: When any Child is going full sail to the Devil, God can blow with a contrary wind of his Spirit, and alter his course. When *Paul* was breathing out persecution against the Saints, and was sailing Hell-ward, God turns him another way; before he was going to *Damascus*, God sends him to *Ananias*; before a Persecutor, now a Preacher. Though our Children are for the present fallen into the *Devils Pound*, God can turn them from the power of Satan*, and bring them in at the *twelfth* hour. *Monica* was weeping for her Son *Augustine*, at last God gave him in upon prayer, and he became a famous instrument in the Church of God.

3. *Reply.*

* Mal. 4. 6.
* Isa 35. 6.

* Acts 26. 18.

2. Branch. 2. The second branch of the objec-
on is; But, my husband takes ill cou-
ses; where I looked for honey, behol
a sting.

Answ. 'Tis sad to have the living a
the dead tyed together; yet, let n
your heart fret with discontent; mou
for his sin, but do not murmur. For,

1. Reply. 1. God hath placed you in your s
lation, and you cannot be discontente
but you quarrel with God. What? f
every cross that befalls us, shall we c
the infinite wisdom of God in questio
O the blasphemy of our hearts!

2. Reply. 2. God can make you a gainer
your Husbands sin; perhaps you h
never been so good, if he had not be
so bad. The fire burns hottest in t
coldest climate: God often by a divi
Antiperistasis turns the sins of others
our good *, and makes our *maladies* o
medicines. The more profane the hu
band is, oft the more holy the wi
grows; the more earthly he is, the mo
heavenly she grows; God makes som
times the Husbands sin a spur to t
Wifes grace. His exorbitances are
si flabellum, as a pair of bellows to blo
up the flame of her zeal and devoti
the more.

* *Etiam peccatum ipsum in bonum convertit.* Aug. in Rom. 8.

Is it not thus? doth not thy Husbands wickedness send thee to prayer? Thou perhaps hadst never prayed so much, if he had not sinned so much: his deadness quickens thee the more, the stone of his heart is an hammer to break thy heart. The Apostle saith, *The unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the believing Husband* *; but in this sense, the believing Wife is sanctified by the unbelieving Husband, she grows better; his sin is a whetstone to her grace, and a *medicine* for her security.

*1 Cor. 1. 14.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Apology Answered.

THe next Apology that discontent makes, is; But my friends have dealt very unkindly with me, and proved false. 4. *Apol.*

Answ. 'Tis sad when a friend proves like a *Brook in Summer* *; The Traveller being parched with heat, comes to the Brook, hoping to refresh himself, but the Brook is dried up: yet be content. *Job 6.15.

1. *Reply.* 1. You are not alone, others of the Saints have been betrayed by friends; and when they have leaned upon them they have been as a *foot out of joyn*

* Psal. 53. 12, 13. This was true in the Type, *David** *It was not an enemy reproached me, but it was thou, a man, my equal, my guide and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together*; and in the Antitype Christ, He was betrayed by a friend; & why should we think it strange to have the same measure dealt unto us, as Jesus Christ had? *the servant is not above his Master.*

2. *Reply.* 2. A Christian may often read his sin in his punishment; Hath not he dealt treacherously with God? how oft hath he grieved the Comforter, broken his vows? and through unbelief sided with Satan against God? How oft hath he abused love? taking the Jewels of Gods mercies, and making a Golden Calf of them, serving his own lusts? how oft hath he made the free grace of God, which should have been a bolt to keep out sin, rather a key to open the door to it? these wounds hath the Lord received *in the house of his friend**. Look upon the unkindness of thy friend, and mourn for thy own unkindness against God: shall a

* Zach. 13. 6.

Christi

Christian condemn that in another, wch he hath been too guilty of himself?

3. Hath thy friend proved treacherous? perhaps you did repose too much confidence in him. If you lay more weight upon an house, than the pillars will bear, it must needs break. God saith, *Trust ye not in a Friend* *; perhaps you did put more trust in him, than you did dare to put in God. Friends are as *Venice-glasses*, we may use them, but if we lean too hard upon them, they will break: Behold matter of humility, but not of sullenness and discontent. 3. *Reply.* * Mic. 7. 5

4. You have a friend in Heaven will never fail you. *There is a friend* (saith *Solomon*) *that sticketh closer than a Brother.* Such a friend is God, He is very studious and inquisitive in our behalf; He hath a debating with himself, a consulting and projecting how he may do us good; He is the *best friend*, which may give contentment in the midst of all discourtesies of friends. 3. *Reply.* Prov. 18. 14.

Consider, 1. He is a *loving friend.* God is love *, hence He is said sometimes to engrave us on the *palms of His hands*, Isa. 49. 16. that we may be never out of His eye; and to carry * 1 Joh. 4. 16. Isa. 49. 16

Isa. 40. 11. us *in His bosom*, Isa. 40. 11. near to His heart. There is no stop or stint in His love; but as the River *Nilus* it overflows all the banks: His love is as far *beyond* our thoughts, as it is above our deserts, O the infinite love of God in giving the Son of His love to be made *flesh**, which was more than if all the Angels had been made *worms*! God in giving Christ to us, gave his very heart to us; here is love pencill'd out in all its glory, and engraven as with the *point of a Diamond*. All other love is hatred in comparison of the love of our friend,

* *Quantus Deus quantillus factus est homo?* Aug.

*1 Pet. 5. 7. 2. He is a *careful* friend; *He careth for you.*

1. He minds and transacts our business as his own, he accounts his peoples interests and concernments as his interest.

2. He provides for us, grace to enrich us, glory to ennoble us; It was *Davids* complaint, *No man careth for my soul**; a Christian hath a friend that cares for him.

*Ps. 142. 4.

* Dan. 2. 20. 3. He is a *Prudent friend**. A friend may sometimes err through ignorance or mistake, and give his friend Poison instead of Sugar; but *God is wise in heart**.

* Job 9. 4.

He

He is skilful as well as faithful; He knows what our diſeaſe is, and what Phyſick is moſt proper to apply; He knows what will do us good, and what wind will be beſt to carry us to Heaven.

4. He is a *Faithful* friend *; and He is faithful, 1. In His promiſes, *In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie hath promiſed* *. Gods people are *children that will not lie*; but God is a God that *cannot* lie; He will not deceive the Faith of His people; nay, He cannot: He is called ἡ ἀλήθεια, *the truth*; He can as well ceaſe to be God, as ceaſe to be true. The Lord may ſometimes *change* His Promiſe, (as when He converts a temporal promiſe into a ſpiritual;) but He can never *break* His Promiſe.

* Deut. 7. 9, 10.

* Tit. 1. 2. Iſa. 63. 8.

5. He is a *Compaſſionate friend*. Hence in Scripture we read of *the yearnings of his bowels* *: Gods friendſhip is nothing elſe but compaſſion; for there is naturally no *affection* in us to deſire His friendſhip, nor no *goodneſs* in us to deſerve it; the Load-ſtone is in himſelf. When we were full of *blood*, He was full of *bowels*: When we were enemies, He ſent an Embaſſage of Peace: When our hearts were turned back

* Jer. 31. 20.

from God, his heart was turned towards us. O the tenderness and sympathy of our friend in Heaven! We ourselves have some relentings of heart to those which are in misery; but it is God who begets all the mercies and bowels that are in us, therefore he is called the *Father of mercies* *.

6. He is a *constant friend*. *His compassions fail not* *. Friends do often in adversity drop off as leaves in Autumn*. *Amici circa sartaginem*, as *Plutarch* saith; these are rather flatterers than friends: *Joab* was for a time faithful to King *David*'s house, he went not after *Absaloms* Treason, but within a while proved false to the Crown, and went after the Treason of *Adonijah* *, God is a friend for ever. *Having loved his own, he loved them to the end* *. What though I am despised? yet God loves me: What though my friends cast me off? yet God loves me: he loves εἰς τέλος, to the end, and there is no end of that love.

This methinks in case of discourtesies, and unkindnesses, is enough to charm down discontent.

* 2 Cor. 1. 3.
* Lam. 3. 22.
* *Dum fueris fœlix, multos numerabis amicos: Nubila si fuerint tempora, solus eris.*
* 1 Kings 1. 7.
* εἰς τέλος ἠγάπησεν αὐτ. Joh. 13. 1.

SECT.

SECT. V.

The fifth Apology Answered.

THE next Apology is, I am under great reproaches *. Let not this discontent; For,

1. It is a sign there is some good in thee; *Quid mali feci?* saith *Socrates*, what evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? The *applause* of the wicked usually denotes some evil, and their *censure* imports some good*. *David* wept and fasted, and that was *turned to his reproach* *; as we must pass to Heaven through the *pikes* of suffering, so through the clouds of Reproach.

2. If your Reproach be for God, as *David*'s was, *For thy sake I have born reproach* *; then it is rather matter of *triumph*, than Dejection: Christ doth not say, when you are reproached, *be discontented*; but χαίρετε, *Rejoyce*.*. Wear your reproach as a Diadem of honour, for now a *Spirit of Glory rests upon you*.*. Put your reproaches into the Inventory of your riches; so did *Moses* *. It should be a Christians ambition to wear his

5. *Apol.* *Deteriores sunt qui famam corrumpunt, quam qui prædia diripiunt.* Greg.

1. *Reply.* *Ps. 16. 20.

*Ps. 69. 10.

2. *Reply.*

*Ps. 69. 7.

*Mat. 5. 12.

* 1 Pet. 4. 14.

* Heb. 11. 26.

his Saviours Livery, though it be sprinkled with blood, and sullied with disgrace.

3. Reply. 3. God will do us *good* by reproach*; as *David* said of *Shimei* his cursing, *It may be the Lord will requite good for his cursing this day* *; this puts us upon searching out sin. A child of God labours to read his sin in every stone of reproach that is cast at him; besides, now we have an opportunity to exercise patience and humility *.

* Boni per contumelias meliores existunt. Greg. in Hom.

* 2 Sam. 16. 12.

* Detractione patientia nostra probatur. Aug. l. 3. contr. Per. l.

4. Reply. 4. Jesus Christ was content to be reproached for us; *He despised the shame of the Cross* *. It may amaze us to think, that He who was God could endure to be spit upon, to be crowned with Thorns *in a kind of jeer*; and when He was ready to *bow* His head upon the Cross, to have the Jews in scorn *wag their* heads, and say, *He saved others, himself He cannot save.* The *shame* of the Cross, was as much as the *blood* of the Cross: His *name* was crucified before His *body*. The sharp Arrows of *Reproach*, that the world did shoot at Christ, went deeper into His heart than the Spear; His suffering was so ignominious, that as if the Sun did blush to be-

* Heb. 11. 2.

behold, it withdrew its bright beams, and masqued it self with a cloud; (and well it might, when the Sun of righteousness was in an eclipse;) all this contumely and reproach did the God of glory *endure*, or rather *despise* for us. Oh then, let us be content to have our names eclipsed for Christ; let not reproach lie at our heart, but let us bind it as a Crown about our head. Alas, what is reproach? this is but *small shot*, how will men stand in the mouth of the Cannon? those who are discontented at a reproach, will be offended at a Faggot.

5. Is not many a man contented to suffer reproach for maintaining his lust? and shall not we for maintaining the truth? Some *Glory in that which is their shame* *: and shall we be ashamed of that which is our glory? Be not troubled at these petty things: he whose heart is once divinely touched with the Load-stone of Gods Spirit, doth account it his honour to be dishonoured for Christ *; and doth as much despise the worlds censure, as he doth their praise. 5. Reply. * Phil. 3. 19. * Act. 15. 4.

6. We live in an Age, wherein men dare reproach God himself. The *Divinity* of the Son of God is blaspheemously 6. Reply.

ously reproached by the *Socinian*; The blessed *Bible* is reproach'd by the *Anti-scripturist*, as if it were but a *legend of lies*, and every mans faith a fable; The *Justice* of God is called to the Bar of Reason by the *Arminian*; The *wisdom* of God in his providential actings, is taxed by the *Atheist*; The *Ordinances* of God are decryed by the *Familist*, as being too heavy a burden for a *free-born* conscience; and too low, and carnal for a sublime Seraphick spirit; The *wayes* of God, which have the Majesty of holiness shining in them, are calumniated by the *Profane*; The mouths of men are open against God, as if he were an *hard Master*, and the path of Religion too strict and severe. If men cannot give God a good word, shall we be discontented or troubled, that they speak hardly of us? Such as labour to bury the glory of Religion, shall we wonder that their throats are *open Sepulchers* *, to bury our good name? Oh let us be contented while we are in Gods scouring-house, to have our names sullied a little; the blacker we seem to be here, the brighter shall we shine when God hath set us upon the Celestial shelf.

Rom. 3. 13.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

The sixth Apology Answered.

THE sixth Apology that Discontent makes, is disrespect in the world. I have not that esteem from men, as is suitable to my quality and graces. And doth this trouble? Consider, 6. *Apol.*

1. The world is an unequal Judge; as it is full of *change*, so of *partiality*. The world gives her *Respects* as she doth her *places of preferment*, more by favour often, than desert. Hast thou the ground of real worth in thee? that is best worth that is in him that *hath* it; Honour is in him that *gives* it *: better deserve respect, and not have it, than have it, and not deserve it. 1. *Reply.* * *Honor est in honorante.*

2. Hast thou grace? God respects thee, and His judgment is best worth prizing. A Believer is a person of honour, being *born of God*. Since thou wast *pretious* in mine eyes, *thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee**. Let the world think what they will of you; perhaps in their eyes you are a *cast-away*; in Gods eyes a *Dove* †, a *Spouse* *, a *Jewel* †, others account you the dregs and off-couring of the world *, but God will give *whole Kingdoms for your ransom* †. Let this content; no matter 2. *Reply.* * Isa. 43. 4. † Can. 2. 14. * Can. 5. 1. † Mal. 3. 17. * 1 Cor. 4. 14. † Isa. 43. 5.

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ter with what oblique eyes I am looked upon in the world, if I am *rectus in curiâ*, God thinks well of me. 'Tis better that God approve, than man applaud. The world may put us in their *Rubrick*, and God put us in His black Book. What is a man the better, that his fellow-prisoners commend him, if his Judge condemn him? Oh labour to keep in with God, prize his love: let my fellow subjects frown, I am Contented, being a favorite of the King of Heaven.

3. *Reply.* 3. If we are the children of God, we must look for disrespect; a believer is *in* the world, but not *of* the world: we are here in a Pilgrim condition, out of our own Country, therefore must not look for the respects and acclamations of the world; it is sufficient that we shall have honour in our own Country *; 'Tis dangerous to be the worlds Favourite.

* Heb. 13. 14.

4. *Reply.* 4. Discontent arising from disrespect, savours too much of pride; an humble Christian hath a lower opinion of himself than others can have of him. He that is taken up about the thoughts of his sins, and how he hath provoked God, he cries out as *Agur*, *I am more*

bruitish

*bruitish than any man** ; and therefore is contented, though he be set *among the dogs of the flock**. Though he be low in the thoughts of others, yet he is thankful, that he is not laid *in the lowest Hell* *. A proud man sets an high value upon himself; and is angry with others, because they will not come up to his price. Take heed of pride; O had others a window to look into thy breast, (as *Crates* once expressed it) or did thy heart stand where thy face doth, thou wouldst wonder to have so much respect.

*Pro.30.2.

*Job.30.1.

*Ps.86.13.

SECT. VII.

The seventh Apology Answered.

THE next Apology is, I meet with very great sufferings for the truth*. Consider,

7. *Apol.*

* *Scala aurea ad [illegible]lum, sed circumspecta gladius.*

1. Your *sufferings* are not [illegible] as your *sins*; Put these two in [illegible] lance, and see which weighs hea[illegible]est; where sin lies heavy, sufferings lie light. A carnal spirit makes more of his sufferings, and less of his sins; he looks upon one at the great end of the

1. *Reply.*

Per-

Perspective, but upon the other at the little end of the Perspective, The carnal heart cries out, Take away the *Frogs*; but a gracious heart cries, take away the *iniquity* †. The one saith, never any one suffered as I have done: but the other saith never any one sinned as I have done †.

†2Sam.24. 10.

†Mich.7.9.

2. *Reply.* 2. Art thou under sufferings? thou hast an opportunity to shew the valour and constancy of thy mind; some of Gods Saints would have accounted it a great favour, to have been honoured with Martyrdom. One said, I am in prison, *till* I am in Prison; thou counteest that a trouble, which others would have worn as an Ensign of their glory.

3. *Reply.* 3. Even those who have gone only upon moral principles, have shewn much constancy and contentment in their sufferings. *Curtius* being bravely mounted, and in Armour, threw himself into a great Gulf, that the City of Rome might according to the Oracle be delivered from the Pestilence; and we having a Divine Oracle, *That they who kill the body, cannot hurt the soul*, shall we not with much constancy and patience devote our selves to injuries for Religion, and rather suffer for the truth,

than

than the truth ſuffer for us? The *Decii* among the *Romans* vowed themſelves to death, that their Legions and Souldiers might be crowned with the honour of the victory. O what ſhould we be content to ſuffer to make the truth victorious! *Regulus* † having ſworn that he would return to *Carthage* (though he knew there was a furnace heating for him there) yet not daring to infringe his Oath, he did adventure to go; we then who are Chriſtians, having made a vow to Chriſt in Baptiſm, and ſo oft renewed it in the bleſſed Sacrament, ſhould with much contentation rather chuſe to ſuffer than violate our ſacred Oath. Thus the bleſſed Martyrs, with what courage and cheerfulneſs did they yield up their Souls to God? and when the fire was ſet to their bodies, yet their ſpirits were not at all fired with paſſion or diſcontent. Though others hurt the *Body*, let them not the *Mind* through diſcontent; ſhew by your heroick courage that you are above thoſe troubles which you cannot be without.

† Pet. Mart.

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

The eighth Apology Answered.

8. *Apol.* THE next Apology is, The prosperity of the wicked. *Answ.* confess 'tis so often, that the evil enjo all the good, and the good endure a the evil. *David*, though a good ma stumbled at this, and had like to ha fallen *; well, be contented for r member:

*Psal. 73. 2.

1. *Reply.* 1. These are not the only things, n the best things; they are mercies with out the pale; these are but acorns wi which God feeds swine; you who a believers, have more choice fruit, th *Olive*, the *Pomgranate*, the fruit which grows on the *true Vine* Jesus Christ; o thers have the fat of the Earth, you have the dew of Heaven; they have a South-land; you have those springs of living water which are clarified with Christs blood, and indulcorated with his love.

2. *Reply.* 2. To see the wicked flourish, is matter rather of *pity* than envy; 'Tis all the Heaven they must have. *We*

to

to you rich men, for ye have received your consolation *. Hence it was that *David* made it his solemn prayer, *Deliver me from the wicked, from men of the World, which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure,* Psalm 17. 14. The words (methinks) are *Davids Litany*; from men of the World which have their portion in this life, *good Lord deliver me.* When the wicked have eaten of their dainty dishes, there comes in a sad reckoning which will spoil all. The World is first *musical*, and then *tragical*: if you would have a man fry, and blaze in Hell, let him have enough of the *fat of the Earth.* O remember, for every sand of mercy that runs out to the wicked, God puts a drop of wrath into his Vial. Therefore as that Souldier said to his Fellow, Do you envy me my Grapes? they cost me dear, I must die for them. So I say, Do you envy the wicked? alas, their prosperity is like *Haman's* Banquet before execution. If a man were to be hanged, would one envy to see him walk to the Gallows through pleasant fields, and fine galleries, or to see him go up the ladder in cloth of gold? The wicked may flourish in their

* Luke 6. 24.
Psal. 17. 14.

their bravery a while; but, when th
flourish as the grass, it is, that they s
† Ps. 92.7. *be destroyed for ever* †. This proud gr
shall be mown down. Whatever a
ner enjoys, he hath a curse with it †; a
† Mal. 2.2. shall we envy? What if poisoned bre
be given to dogs? The long furrows
the backs of the godly, have a *seed*
blessing in them when the table of t
wicked becomes a snare, and their h
nor their halter.

SECT. IX.

The ninth Apology Answered.

9. *Apol.* 2. THE next Apology that disco
tent makes for it self, is *the*
vil of the times. The times are full
Heresie and Impiety, and this is th
which troubles me. This Apology co
sists of two branches, to which I sh
answer in *specie*; and,

1. *Branch.* The Heresie of the times.

1. The times are full of Heresi
This is indeed sad, when the Dev
cannot by violence destroy th
Church, he endeavours to poison it
when he cannot with *Sampsons* Fo
tails set the Corn on fire, then h
sow

ws tares: as he labours to destroy the eace of the Church by *Division*, so e truth of it by *Errour*; we may cry ut with *Seneca*, *Vere vivimus in tempo-um facibus*. we live in times wherein here is a sluce open to all novel opini-ns, and every mans *opinion* is his *Bible*. Well, this may make us mourn, but let not murmur through discontent: Con-ider,

1. Errour makes a discovery of men, 1. *Reply.*

1. *Bad men*: Error discovers such as are tainted and corrupt. When the Le-prosie brake forth in the forehead, then was the *Leper* discovered. Errour is a spiritual Bastard; the Devil is the Fa-ther, and pride the Mother; you never knew an erroneous man, but he was a proud man: now, it is good that such men should be laid open; to the intent, first, that Gods righteous Judgments upon them may be adored †; Second-ly, that others who are free, be not infected. If a man have the Plague, it is well it breaks forth; for my part, I would avoid an Heretick as I would avoid the Devil, for he is sent on his errand. I appeal to you, if there were a Tavern in this City, where under

1.

† 2 Thes. 2. 12.

under a pretence of selling Wine, m
ny Hogsheads of Poison were to be sol
were it not well that others shou
know of it, that they might not bu
It is good that those who have poiso
ed opinions should be known, that th
people of God may not come near, e
ther the scent or taste of that poison.

2. Error is a *Touch-stone* to discov
good men, it tries the Gold: *There m*
be Heresies, that they which are sou
approved, may be made manifest *. Th
our love to Christ, and zeal for tru
doth appear. God shews you who a
the living fish, *viz.* such as swim again
the stream; who are the sound shee
viz. such as feed in the green pastures
the Ordinances; who are the Dove
viz. such as live in the best air, whe
the Spirit breaths: God sets a Ga
land of honour upon these; *These a*
they which came out of great tribulation *
So, these are they that have oppose
the Errours of the times; these a
they that have preserved the virginit
of their conscience; who have kep
their judgment sound, and their hea
soft. God will have a Trophy of ho
nour set upon some of his Saints; the
shall be renowned for their sincerity,

* 1 Cor. 11. 14.

* Rev. 7. 14.

being

being like the Cypreſs, *quæ viriditatem in hyeme not amittit* *, which keeps its greenneſs and freſhneſs in the Winter ſeaſon. * *Ambroſe.*

2. Be not ſinfully diſcontented; for God can make the errours of the Church advantagious to truth. Thus the truths of God have come to be more beaten out and confirmed; as it is in *Law*, one man laying a falſe title to a piece of Land, the true title hath by this means been the more ſearched into and ratified; ſome had never ſo ſtudied to defend the truth by *Scripture*, if others had not endeavoured to overthrow it by *Sophiſtry*; all the miſts and fogs of errour that have riſen out of the bottomleſs pit, have made the glorious Sun *of truth* to ſhine ſo much the brighter. Had not *Arius* and *Sabellius* broached thoſe damnable Errours, the truth of thoſe queſtions about the bleſſed *Trinity*, had never been ſo diſcuſſed and defended by *Athanaſius*, *Auguſtine*, and others; had not the Devil brought in ſo much of his *princely darkneſs*, the Champions for truth had never run ſo faſt to Scriture to light their Lamps. So that God who hath a *wheel within a wheel*, over-rules theſe things wiſely, and 2. *Reply.*

turns

turns them to the best. Truth is a Heavenly plant that settles by shaking.

3. *Reply. Etiam ramenta auri pretiosa.*

3. God raiseth the price of his truth the more; the very shreds and filings of truth are venerable. When there is much counterfeit metal abroad, we prize the true Gold the more: the pure Wine of truth is never more pretious than when unsound Doctrines are broached and vented.

4. *Reply.*

Error makes us more thankful to God for the Jewel of truth. When you see another infected with the Plague, how thankful are you, that God hath freed you from the infection? when we see others have the *Leprosie in the Head*, how thankful are we to God, that he hath not given us over to believe a lye and so be damned? It is a good use that may be made even of the errour of the times, when it makes us more humble and thankful, adoring the free grace of God, who hath kept us from drinking of that deadly poyson.

2. *Branch of the Apology.* The impiety of the times.

2. The second branch of the Apology that discontent makes, is the *impiety of the times.* I live and converse among the profane; *O that I had wings like a Dove, that I might flye away and*

at rest * ! *Answer*. It is indeed sad to be mixed with the wicked, *David beheld the trangressors, and was grieved* *; and *Lot* (who was a bright Star in a dark night) was *vexed*, or as the word in the Original may bear, *wearied out* *, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν ἀθέσμων ἐν ἀσελγείᾳ ἀναστροφῆς, *with the unclean conversation of the wicked**; he made the sins of *Sodom* spears to pierce his own Soul; we ought (if there be any spark of divine love in us) to be very sensible of the sins of others, and to have our hearts bleed for them: yet let us not break forth in murmuring or discontent, knowing that God in his providence hath permitted it, and surely not without some reasons; For,

* Ps. 55. 6.

* Ps. 119. 58.

*Καταποιόμενος.

*2Pet. 2. 7.

1. The Lord makes the wicked an hedge to defend the godly; the wise God often makes those who are *wicked* and *peaceable*, a means to safeguard his people from those who are *wicked* and *cruel*. The King of *Babylon* kept *Jeremy*, and gave special order for his looking to, that he did want nothing *. God sometimes makes *brazen sinners* to be *brazen walls*, to defend his people.

1. *Reply*.

* Jer. 35. 11, 12.

2. God doth interline and mingle the wicked with the godly, that the

2. *Reply*.

godly may be a means to ſave the wic
ed; ſuch is the *beauty of holineſs*, that
hath a magnetical force in it, to allu
and draw even the wicked. Sometim
God makes a believing husband
means to convert an unbelieving wif
and *è contra: What knoweſt thou,*
wife, whether thou ſhalt ſave thy husband
Or how knoweſt thou, O man, whether th
ſhalt ſave thy Wife *? The godly li
ving among the wicked, by their pr
dent advice and pious example, ha
won them to the embracing of Religio
if there were not ſome godly amon
the wicked, how, in a probable wa
without a miracle, can we imagine tha
the wicked ſhould be converted? tho
who are now ſhining Saints in He
ven, ſometimes *ſerved divers luſts*
Paul once a Perſecutor; *Auguſtine* onc
a Manichee; *Luther* once a Monk
but by the ſevere and holy carriage o
the godly, were converted to the
Faith.

* 1 Cor. 7. 16.

* Tit. 3. 3.

SECT.

SECT. X.

The tenth Apology Answered.

THe next Apology that Discontent makes, is lowness of parts and gifts. 10. *Apol.*

I cannot, saith the Christian, discourse with that fluency, nor pray with that elegancy as others.

Answ. 1. *Grace is beyond Gifts*; Thou compareſt thy Grace with anothers Gifts, there is a vast difference; Grace without Gifts is infinitely better than Gifts without Grace; in Religion, the *vitals* are best; Gifts are a more extrinsecal and common work of the Spirit, which is incident to reprobates; grace is a more distinguishing work, and is a Jewel hung only upon the Elect. Hast thou the *seed of God*, the *holy anointing?* be content. 1. *Reply.*

1. Thou sayest thou canst not discourse with that fluency as others.

Answ. Experiments in Religion are beyond notions, and *impressions* beyond *expressions*. *Judas* (no doubt) could make a learned discourse of Christ, but

well fare the woman in the Gospel that felt virtue coming out of him*. A sanctified heart is better than a silver tongue. There is as much difference between gifts and grace, as between a Tulip painted on the Wall, and one growing in the Garden.

* Luke 8. 47.

II. Thou sayest, thou canst not pray with that elegancy as others.

Answ. Prayer is a matter more for the *heart* than the *head*. In prayer it is not so much *fluency* prevails, as *vency**; nor is God so much taken with the elegancy of speech, as the efficacy of the Spirit. Humility is better than volubility; here the *Mourner* is the *Orator*, sighs and groans are the best Rhetorick.

* Jam. 5. 16 δεήσεις ἐνεργουμένη.

2. *Rep.* 2. Be not discontented; For, God doth usually proportion a mans parts to the place where he calls him: some are set in a higher sphere and function, their place requires more parts and abilities; but the most inferiour member is useful in its place, and shall have a power delegated for the discharge of its peculiar office.

SECT

SECT. II.

The eleventh Apology Answered.

THE next Apology is, *The troubles of the Church.* Alas, my disquiet and discontent is not so much for my self as the publick. The Church of God suffers. 11. *Apo.*

Answ. I confess it is sad, and we ought for this *to hang our Harp upon the Willow* *; he is a wooden leg in Christs body, that is not sensible of the state of the body. As a Christian must not be *proud flesh*, so neither *dead flesh.* When the Church of God suffers, we must sympathize: *Jeremiah wept for the Virgin Daughter of Sion.* We must feel our brethrens hard Cords through our soft Beds; in Musick, if one string be touched, all the rest sound; when God strikes upon our brethren, *our bowels must sound as an Harp* *; be sensible, but do not give way to discontent. For consider, * Ps. 137. * Is. 16. 11.

1. *God sits at the Stern of His Church* *; Sometimes it is as a Ship tossed upon the Waves, *O thou afflicted* 1. *Reply.* * Ps. 46. 5.

†Is.54.12. *flicted and tossed* †; but cannot God bring this Ship to Heaven, though it meet with a Storm upon the Sea? The Ship in the Gospel was tossed, because *sin* was in it; but it was not overwhelmed, because *Christ* was in it. Christ is in the Ship of his Church, fear not sinking: The Churches Anchor is cast in Heaven. Do not we think God loves his Church, and takes as much care of it as we can? The names of the twelve Tribes were on *Aarons breast*; signifying how near to Gods heart his people are: they are his *portion* †, and shall they be lost? His *glory* †, and shall that be finally Eclipsed? No certainly. God can deliver his Church, not only *from*, but *by* opposition. The Churches pangs shall help forward her deliverance.

†Deut. 32. 9.

†Is.46.13.

2. *Reply.* 2. *God hath alwayes propagated Religion by sufferings.* The foundation of the Church hath been laid *in blood* †, and these sanguine showers have ever made it more fruitful. *Cain* put the knife to *Abels* throat, and ever since the Churches Veins have bled; but she is like the *Vine*, which by bleeding grows; and like the Palm-tree, which may have this Motto, *Percussa resurgit*, the more

† *Sanguine fundata est Ecclesia, sanguine crevit.*

more weight is laid upon it, the higher it riseth. The holiness and patience of the Saints under their persecutions, hath much added both to the *growth* of Religion and the *Crown*. *Basil* and *Tertullian* observe of the primitive Martyrs, that divers of the Heathens seeing their zeal and constancy, turned Christians. Religion is that *Phœnix* which hath alwayes revived and flourished *in the ashes* of holy men: *Isaiah* sawn asunder; *Peter* crucified at *Jerusalem* with his Head downwards †; *Cyprian* Bishop of *Carthage*, *Polycarp* of *Smyrna*, both martyr'd for Religion: Yet evermore the Truth hath been *sealed* by blood, and gloriously dispersed; whereupon *Julian* did forbear to persecute, *non ex clementia, sed invidia*; not out of pity, but envy; because the Church grew so fast, and multiplied, as *Nazianzen* well observes.

† Euseb.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Apology Answered.

THe twelfth Apology that Discontent makes for it self, is this: It is not my Trouble that troubles me, 12. *Apol.*

but it is my sins that do disquiet and discontent.

Answ. Be sure it be so; do not prevaricate with God and thy own Soul. In true mourning for sin, when the present suffering is removed, yet the sorrow is not removed; but suppose the Apology be real, and *sin* is the ground of your discontent; yet I answer, a mans disquiet about sin may be beyond its bounds in these three cases.

1. *Reply. Dolor non animans.*

1. When it is *disheartning*; that is, when it sets up sin above mercy. If *Israel* had only pored upon their sting, and not looked up to the *brazen Serpent*, they had never been healed. That sorrow for sin which drives us away from God, is not without sin; for there is more *despair* in it than *remorse*: The soul hath so many tears in its eyes that it cannot see Christ. Sorrow as sorrow doth not save (that were to make a Christ of our tears,) but is useful as it is preparatory in the soul, making sin *vile*, and Christ *precious*. Oh look up to the brazen Serpent, *the Lord Jesus*; a sight of his blood will revive; the Medicine of his *merits* is broader than our sore.

It

It is Satans policy, either to keep us from seeing our sins, or if we will needs see them, that we may *be swallowed up of sorrow* *? Either he would *stupifie* us, or *affright* us; either keep the glass of the Law from our eyes, or else pensil out our sins in such crimson colours, that we may sink in the *quicksands* of despair.

* Cor. 2. 27.

2. When sorrow is *indisposing*, it untunes the Heart for prayer, meditation, holy conference; it cloisters up the soul: This is not sorrow, but rather sullenness, and doth render a man not so much *Penitential* as *Cynical*.

2. *Dolor impediens.*

1. When it is *out of season*; God bids us *rejoyce*, and we *hang our Harps upon the Willows*; he bids us *trust*, and we cast our selves down, and are brought even to the margin of despair. If Satan cannot keep us from mourning, he will be sure to put us upon it when it is least in season.

3. *Dolor intempestivus.*

When God calls us in a special manner to be thankful for mercy, and put on our white Robes, then Satan will be putting us into mourning, and instead of a *Garment* of *praise*, cloath us with a *Spirit of heavinesse*; so God loseth the acknow-

ledgement of a mercy, and we the comfort.

If thy ſorrow hath tuned and fitted thee for Chriſt, if it hath raiſed in thee high prizings of him, ſtrong hungrings after him, ſweet delight in him; this is as much as God requires, and a Chriſtian doth but ſin to vex and torture himſelf further upon the wrack of his own diſcontent.

And thus I hope I have anſwered the moſt material Objections and Apologies which this ſin of Diſcontent doth make for it ſelf. I ſee no reaſon why a Chriſtian ſhould be diſcontented unleſs for his diſcontent. Let me in the next place propound ſomething which may be both as a Loadſtone and a Whetſtone to Contentation.

CHAP. XI.

Divine motives to Contentment.

AND ſo I proceed to the Arguments or Motives that may quicken to Contentment.

SECT.

SECT. I.

The first Argument to Contentment.

1. CONsider the excellency of it. Contentment is a flower that doth not grow in every Garden; it teacheth a man how in the midst of want to abound. You would think it were excellent if I could prescribe a Receipt or Antidote against Poverty; but behold, here is that which is more excellent, for a man to want, and yet have enough; this alone contentment of Spirit brings. Contentation is πᾶν φάρμακον, a remedy against all our troubles, a *levamen* to all our burdens; it is the *cure* of *care*. The first Argument to Contentation

Contentation, though it be not properly a *Grace* (it is rather a *disposition of mind*) yet in it there is *optimum temperamentum*, an happy temperature and mixture of all the Graces: It is a most pretious compound, which is made up of *Faith*, *Patience*, *Meekness*, *Humility*, *&c.* which are the ingredients put into it. Now there are in *specie* these seven rare excellencies in Contentment.

1. *Excellency of Contentation.*

1. A contented Christian *carries Heaven about him*: For what is Heaven, but that sweet repose and full contentment that the soul shall have in God? In contentment there is the first-fruits of Heaven.

There are two things in a contented spirit which makes it like heaven.

1. *Ibi Deus.*

1. *God is there*: Something of God is to be seen in that Heart. A discontented Christian is like a rough tempestuous Sea; when the water is rough you can see nothing there; but when it is smooth and serene, then you may behold your face in the water *: When the Heart rageth through discontent, it is like a rough Sea; you can see nothing there unless passion and murmuring; there is nothing of God; nothing of Heaven in that Heart: but by virtue of Contentment 'tis like the Sea when it is smooth and calm; there is *a face shining there*; you may see something of Christ in that Heart, a representation of all the graces.

* Prov. 27. 19.

2. *Ibi requies*

2. *Rest is there*: O what a Sabbath is kept in a contented Heart! What an Heaven! A contented Christian is like *Noah* in the Ark; though the Ark were tossed with Waves,

Waves, *Noah* could sit and sing in the Ark. The soul that is gotten into the *Ark of Contentment* sits quiet, and sails above all the Waves of trouble; he can sing in this spiritual Ark. The wheels of the Chariot move, but the Axle-tree stirs not: The circumference of the Heavens is carried about the Earth, but the Earth moves not out of his Centre. When we meet with motion and change in the creatures round about us, a contented spirit is not stirred or moved out of its centre. The sails of a Mill move with the Wind, but the Mill it self stands still: An Emblem of Contentment. When our outward estate moves with the wind of Providence, yet the Heart is settled through Holy contentment; and when others are like Quick-silver, shaking and trembling through disquiet, the contented spirit can say as *David*, *O God, my Heart is fixed, my Heart is fixed*: What is this but a piece of Heaven? Ps. 57. 7.

2. What ever is defective in the creature is made up in *Contentment*. A Christian may want the comforts that others have, the land and possessions; but God hath distilled into his

2. *Excellency.*

his Heart that contentment which is far better: In this sense that is true of our Saviour, *He shall have in this life an hundred fold* †. Perhaps he that venture all for Christ never hath his house or land again; I, but God gives him a *contented spirit*, and this breeds such joy in the soul as is infinitely sweeter than all his houses and lands which he left for Christ. It was sad with *David* in regard of his outward comforts, he being driven (as some think) from his Kingdom; yet in regard of that sweet contentment which he found in God, he had more comfort than men use to have in time of *Harvest and Vintage* †. One man hath house and lands to live upon, another hath nothing, only a small trade, yet even that brings in a livelihood. A Christian may have little in the world, but he drives the trade of contentment, and so he knows as well how to want as to *abound*. O the rare *Art* or rather *Miracle* of Contentment! Wicked men are often disquieted in the enjoyment of all things, the contented Christian is well in the want of all things.

† Mat. 19.

† Ps. 4. 7.

Quest. *Quest.* But how comes a Christian to be contented in the deficiency of outward comforts?

Answ.

Answ. A Christian finds contentment distilled out of the breasts of the Promises: He is poor in *Purse*; but rich in *Promise*. There is one Promise brings much sweet contentment into the soul; *They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing* †. If the thing we desire be good for us, we shall have it; if it be not good, then the not having it is good for us. The resting satisfied with this Promise gives contentment. *Answ.* Psal. 34. 10.

3. Contentment makes a man in tune to serve God; it oyls the wheels of the soul, and makes it more agile and nimble; it composeth the Heart; and makes it fit for prayer, meditation, *&c.* How can he that is in a passion of grief of discontent *serve God without distraction* †? Contentment doth prepare and tune the Heart. First you prepare the Viol, and wind up the strings, ere you play a fit of Musick. When a Christians heart is wound up to this Heavenly frame of contentment, then it is fit for duty. A discontented Christian is like *Saul*, when the *evil spirit* came upon him. O what jarrings and discords doth he make in Prayer! When an Army is put into disorder, *3. Excellency.* † 1 Cor. 7. 35.

now

now it is not fit for Battel: When the thoughts are scattered and distracted about the cares of this life, a man is not fit for devotion. Discontent takes the Heart wholly off from God, and fixeth it upon the present trouble, so that a mans mind is not upon his *Prayer*, but upon his *Cross*.

Discontent doth disjoynt the soul, and it is impossible now that a Christian should go so steadily and cheerfully in Gods service. O how lame is his devotion! The discontented person gives God but *half* a duty; his Religion is nothing but *bodily exercise*, it wants a soul to animate it. *David* would not offer that to God which *cost him nothing* *: where there is too much worldly *care*, there is too little spiritual *cost* in a duty. The discontented person doth his duties *by halfs*; he is just like *Ephraim*, a *cake not turned* *; he is a cake baked on one side; he gives God the *one side*, but not the spiritual part; his Heart is not in Duty; he is baked on one side, but the other side Dough: and what profit is there of such raw indigested services? He that gives God only the skin of worship, what

* 2 Sam. 24. 24.

* Hos. 7. 8.

an he expect more than the ſhell of comfort? Contentation brings the heart into frame; and then only do we give God the flower and ſpirits of a duty, when the ſoul is compoſed: now a Chriſtian doth *rem agere*, his *H*eart is intenſe and ſerious. There are ſome duties which we cannot perform as we ought without Contentment: As,

1. *To rejoyce in God. H*ow can he rejoyce that is diſcontented? *He* is fitter for *Repining* than *Rejoycing*.

2. *To be thankful for mercy*. Can a diſcontented perſon be thankful? *He* can be *fretful*, not thankful.

3. *To juſtifie God in his proceedings* *. How can he do this who is diſcontented with his condition? He will ſooner cenſure Gods wiſdom, than clear his juſtice. O then how excellent is *Contentation*, which doth prepare, & as it were ſtring the heart for duty? indeed Contentment doth not only make our duties lively and agile, but *acceptable*. 'Tis this that puts beauty and worth into them, for Contentment *ſettles* the ſoul. Now, as it is with *Milk*, when it is always ſtirring you can make nothing of it, but let it ſettle a while, and then it turns to cream: When the

* Ezra 9. 23.

the Heart is over-much ſtirred with di quiet and diſcontent, you can make no thing of thoſe duties; how thin, how flatten and jejune are they? but when the Heart is once ſetled by Holy Contentment, now there is ſome worth in our duties, now they turn to cream.

4. *Excellency.* 4. Contentment is the ſpiritual *Arch* or Pillar of the ſoul: it fits a man to *bear burdens*: he whoſe Heart is ready to ſink under the leaſt ſin, by vertue of this hath a ſpirit invincible under ſufferings. A contented Chriſtian is like the Camomile, the more it is trodden upon, the more it grows: As Phyſick works Diſeaſes out of the body, ſo doth Contentment work trouble out of the Heart: Thus it argues; If I am under reproach, God can vindicate me; If I am in want, God can relieve me. *Ye ſhall not ſee wind or rain; yet the valley ſhall be filled with water* †. Thus holy Contentment keeps the heart from fainting. In the *Autumn*, when the fruit and leaves are blown off; ſtill there is ſap in the root: When there is an *Autumn* upon our external felicity, and the leaves of our eſtate drop off; ſtill there is the ſap of Contentment in the Heart, and a Chriſtian hath life inwardly

† 2 Kings 3. 17.

wardly when his outward comforts do not blossom. The contented Heart is never out of Heart. Contentation is a Golden shield that doth beat back discouragements. *Humility* is like to the net, which keeps the soul down, when it is rising through passion; and *Contentment* is the cork which keeps the heart up when it is sinking through discouragement. Contentment is the great underpropper; it is like the *beam* which bears whatever weight is laid upon it; nay, it is like a *Rock* that breaks the waves.

'Tis strange to observe the same affliction lying upon two men, how differently they carry themselves under it. The contented Christian is like *Sampson*, that carried away the gates of the City upon his back †; he can go away with his cross chearfully, and makes nothing of it; the other is like *Issachar* couching down under his burden †: the reason is, the one is content, and that breedscourage; the other discontent, and that breeds fainting. Discontent swells the grief, and grief breaks the heart. When this sacred sinew of Contentment begins to shrink, we go limping under our afflictions. We knownot what burdens

† Judges 16. 3.

† Gen. 49. 14.

burdens God may exercise us with; let us therefore preserve Contentment; as our *Contentment*, such will be our *courage*. *David* with his five stones and his sling, defied *Goliah*, and overcame him. Get but Contentment into the sling of your heart, and with this sacred stone you may both defie the world, and conquer it; you may break those afflictions which else will break you.

5. *Excellency.* 5. A fifth excellency is, Contentment prevents many *sins* and *tentations*.

1. It prevents many *sins*. Where there wants Contentment, there wants no sin; discontentedness without condition is a sin that doth not go alone, but is like the first link of the chain, which draws all the other links along with it. In particular, there are two sins which Contentation prevents.

1. *Impatience*. Discontent and Impatience are two twins; *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer* * ? As if God were so tied, that he must give us the mercy just when we desire. Impatience is no small sin, as will appear if you consider whence it ariseth: As,

* 2 Kings 6. 33.

1. It

1. It is for want of Faith. Faith gives a right notion of God; it is an intelligent grace; it believes that Gods wisdom tempers, and his love sweetens all ingredients; this works patience: *Shall I not drink the Cup which my Father hath given me?* Impatience is the daughter of Infidelity. If a Patient hath an ill opinion of the Physician, and conceits that he comes to poyson him, he will take none of his Receipts. When we have a prejudice against God, and conceit that he comes to kill us, and undo us, then we storm, and cry out through impatience. We are like a foolish man ('tis *Chrysostoms simile*) that cries out, Away with the plaster, though it be in order to a cure; is it not better that the plaster smart a little, than the wound fester and rankle?

2. Impatience is for want of love to God. We will bear his reproofs whom we love, not only patiently, but thankfully. *Love thinks no evil* *. It puts the fairest and most candid gloss upon the actions of a friend; *Love covers evil.* If it were possible for God in the least manner to erre, (which were blasphemy to think) love would cover that error;

* 1 Cor. 13. 5.

love

love takes every thing in the best sense. It makes us bear any stroke, *It endureth all things* †; had we love to God, we should have patience.

† 1 Cor. 13. 7.

3. *Impatience* is for want of *Humility*. The impatient man was never humbled under the burden of sin; he that studies his sins, the numberless number of them, how they are twisted together, and sadly accented, is patient, and saith, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him* †. The greater noise drowns the lesser; when the Sea roars, the Rivers are still; he that lets his thoughts expatiate about sin, is both silent and amazed, he wonders it is no worse with him. How great then is this sin of Impatience! and how excellent is *Contentation*, which is a *Supersedeas* or counterpoison against this sin! The contented Christian believing that God doth all in love, is patient, and hath not one word to say, unless to justifie God †. That is the first sin which Contentation prevents.

† Mic. 7. 9.

†Ps. 51. 4.

2. It prevents *murmuring*, a sin which is a degree higher than the other; Murmuring is a quarrelling with God, and inveighing against him; *They speak against*

ainst God †; the murmurer saith interpretatively, that God hath not dealt well with him, and he hath deserved better from him. The murmurer *charg-eth God with folly*: This is the language, or rather *blasphemy* of a murmuring spirit; God might have been a wiser and a better God. The murmurer is a mutineer. The *Israelites* are called in the same text *murmurers* and *rebels* †; and is not *rebellion as the sin of Witchcraft?* thou that art a *murmurer*, art in the account of God as a *witch*, a *sorcerer*, as one that deals with the devil. This is a sin of the first magnitude: Murmuring oft ends in cursing: *Micha's* mother fell to cursing when the *talents of silver were taken away* †. So doth the murmurer when a part of his estate is taken away: Our *murmuring* is the devils *musick*; this is that sin which God cannot bear; *How long shall I bear with this people that murmur against me?* It is a sin which whets the sword against a people; it is a land-destroying sin; *Murmur ye not as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer* †. 'Tis a ripening sin; this, without Gods mercy, will hasten *Englands* funerals. O then how excellent is contentation, which

† Numb. 21.5.

† Numb. 17.10.

† Judges 17. 2.

† Numb. 14.7.

† 1 Cor. 10. 10.

which prevents this sin! To be con-
tented, and yet murmur, is a soloe-
sm: A contented Christian doth acq-
esce in his present condition, and do
not murmur, but admire. Herein ap-
pears the excellency of Content-
tion, it is a spiritual antidote against
sin.

2. Contentment prevents man
temptations: Discontent is a Dev-
that is always tempting: 1. It puts
man upon *indirect means*: He that i
poor and discontented will attemp
any thing; he will go to the Devil fo
riches: he that is proud and disconten-
ted will hang himself, as *Achitophel* did
when his Counsel was rejected. Satan
takes great advantage of our discon-
tent; he loves to fish in these troubled wa-
ters. Discontent doth both eclipse rea-
son and weaken faith; and it is Satan's
policy, he doth usually break over the
hedge where it is weakest. Discontent
makes a breach in the soul, and usually
at this breach the devil enters by a tenta-
tion and storms the soul. How easily can
the Devil by his *Logick* dispute a dis-
contented Christian into sin? He forms
such a syllogism as this: He that is in
want must study self preservation: But
you

1. Tentation.

you are now in want, therefore you ought to ſtudy ſelf-preſervation. Hereupon to make good his *Concluſion*, he tempts to the forbidden fruit, not diſtinguiſhing between what is *needful* and what is *lawful*. What, ſaith he, doſt thou want a livelihood? never be ſuch a fool as ſtarve: take the *riſing ſide* at a venture, be it good or bad, *eat the bread of deceit, drink the wine of violence*. Thus you ſee how the diſcontented man is a prey to that ſad tentation, * *to ſteal, and take Gods Name in vain*. Contentation is a ſhield againſt tentation; for he that is contented, knows as well how to *want* as to *abound*.

* Prov. 30. 9.

He will not ſin to get a living; though the *bill of fare* grows ſhort, he is content. He lives as the birds of the air, upon Gods providence, and doubts not but he ſhall have enough to pay for his paſſage to Heaven.

4. Diſcontent tempts a man to *Atheiſm* and *Apoſtaſie*; ſure there is no God to take care of things here below; would he ſuffer them to be in want who have *walked mournfully before him* *? ſaith Diſcontent; Throw off Chriſts livery; deſiſt from thy Religion. Thus *Jobs* wife, being diſcon-

2. Tentation.

* Mal. 3. 14.

tented with her condition, saith to her husband, *dost thou still retain thy integrity**; as if she had said, Dost thou not see, *Job*, what is become of all thy Religion; *Thou fearest God, and eschewest evil*, and what art thou the better? See how God turns his hand against thee; he hath smitten thee in thy body, estate, relations, and *dost thou still retain thy integrity*? what? still devout? still weep and pray before him? Thou fool, cast off Religion, *turn Atheist*. Here was a sore tentation that the Devil did hand over to *Job* by his discontented wife; only his grace as a golden shield did ward off the blow from his heart, *Thou speakest as one of the foolish women*. What profit is it, saith the discontented person, *to serve the Almighty?* Those that never trouble themselves about Religion are the prosperous men? and I in the mean while suffer want? as good give over driving the trade of Religion, if this be all my reward. This is a sore tentation, and oft it prevails: Atheism is the fruit that grows out of the blossom of discontent.

* Job 2. 9.

Oh then behold the excellency of Contentment! It doth repel this tentation.

tation. If God be mine, ſaith the contented ſpirit, it is enough; though I have no lands or tenements, his ſmile makes Heaven; *His loves are better than wine*; *Better is the gleanings of* Ephraim, *than the Vintage of* Abiezei *: I have little *in hand*, but much *in hope*; my *livelihood* is ſhort, but this his promiſe, *even eternal life* *: I am purſued by *malice*; but better is perſecuted godlineſs than proſperous wickedneſs. Thus divine contentment is a ſpiritual antidote both againſt *ſin* and *tentation*.

* Judg. 8. 2.

* 1 John 2. 25.

6. Contentment ſweetens every condition. Chriſt turned the water into Wine; ſo Contentment turns the water of *Marah* into ſpiritual Wine; Have I but little? yet it is more than I can deſerve or challenge: This *modicum* is in mercy; 'tis the fruit of Chriſts blood; 'tis the legacy of free grace: A ſmall preſent ſent from a King is highly valued: This little I have is with a good conſcience. 'Tis not *ſtolen water*; guilt hath not muddied or poiſoned it; it runs pure. This *little* is a pledge of more; this bit of bread, is an earneſt of that bread which I ſhall eat *in the Kingdom of God.*

6. *Excellency.*

This little Water in the Cruſe, is a earneſt of that heavenly *Nectar*, which ſhall be diſtill'd from the *true Vi* Do I meet with ſome croſſes? my comfort is, if they be heavy I have not far to go; I ſhall but carry my croſs to *Golgotha*, and there I ſhall leave it. My croſs is light in regard of the weight of glory. Hath God taken away my comforts from me? 'Tis well, the Comforter ſtill abides. Thus *Contentment*, as an honey-comb, drops ſweetneſs into every condition. Discontent is a leaven that ſowres every comfort, it puts Aloes and Wormwood upon the breaſt of the creature, it leſſens every mercy, it trebbles every croſs; but the contented ſpirit ſucks ſweetneſs from every flower of providence, it can make a Treacle of Poiſon. *Contentation* is full of *Conſolation.*

7. Excellency. 7. Contentment hath this excellency, it is the beſt *Commentator* upon Providence; it makes a fair interpretation of all Gods dealings: Let the Providence of God be never ſo dark or bloody; Contentment doth conſtrue them ever in the beſt ſenſe. I may ſay of it as the Apoſtle of charity,

ty, *It thinks no evil* *. Sickness (saith Contentment) is Gods furnace to refine his gold, and make it sparkle the more; the prison is an Oratory, or house of prayer. What if God melts away the creature from me? he saw perhaps my heart grew too much in love with it; had I been long in that fat pasture, I should have surfeited; and the better my estate had been, the worse my soul would have been. God is wise; he hath done this, either to prevent some sin, or to exercise some grace. What a blessed frame of heart is this? A contented Christian is an Advocate for God against unbelief and impatience; whereas discontent takes every thing from God in the worst sense; it doth implead and censure God; This evil I feel is but a symptom of greater evil; God is about to undo me; *The Lord hath brought us hither into the wilderness to slay us* *. The contented soul takes all well; and when his condition is never so bad, he can say, *Yet God is good* *.

* 1 Cor. 13.

* Numb. 20. 4.

* Ps. 73. 1.

SECT. II.

The second Argument to Contentation.

THe second Argument or Motive to Contentment is, a Christian hath that which may make him content*.

1. Hath not God given thee Christ? in him there are *unsearchable riches**: He is such a Golden *Mine* of Wisdom and Grace, that all the Saints and Angels can never dig to the bottom? as *Seneca* said to his friend *Polybius**, *Never complain of thy hard fortune as long as* Cæsar *is thy friend*: so I say to a Believer, Never complain as long as Christ is thy friend: He is an enriching Pearl, a sparkling Diamond; the infinite lustre of his merits makes us shine in Gods eyes*; in him there is both *fulness* and *sweetness*; he is *ineffabile bonum**: Scrue up your thoughts to the highest ἀκμὴ and pinacle, stretch them to the utmost period, let them expatiate to their full latitude and extent, yet they fall infinitely short of those ineffable and inexhaustible treasures which are locked up

* *O fortunatos nimium bona si sua norint.* Virg.

* Eph. 3. 1.

* *Fas tibi non est de fortuna conqueri, salvo Cæsare.* Sen.

* Eph. 1. 7.

* Aug.

up in Jesus Christ: And is not here enough to give the soul content? A Christian that wants *necessaries*, yet having Christ, he hath *the one thing needful* *.

* *Qui habet habentem omnia, habet omnia.*

2. The soul is exercised and enamelled with the graces of the Spirit, and is not here enough to give Contentment? Grace is of a divine birth; it is the new plantation; it is the flower of the heavenly Paradise; 'tis the embroidery of the Spirit; 'tis *the seed of God* *; 'tis * *the sacred unction*; 'tis Christs portraicture in the soul; 'tis the very foundation on which the superstructure of glory is laid. O, of what infinite value is Grace! what a Jewel is Faith! well may it be called *precious* Faith *! What is love, but a divine sparkle in the soul? A soul beautified with grace, is like a room richly hung with Arras, or Tapestry, or the Firmament bespangled with glittering Stars. These are the *true riches* *, which cannot stand with reprobation, and is not here enough to give the soul *Contentment*? What are all other things but like the wings of a butterfly, curiously painted; but they defile our fingers. Earthly riches,

* 1 John 3. 9.
* 1 John 2. 27.
* 2 Pet. 1. 1.
* Luke 16. 11.

* *Divitiæ corporales paupertatis plenæ sunt.* Aug.

saith *Augustine*, are full of poverty*; so indeed they are. For, 1. They cannot enrich the soul; Oftentimes under silken apparel, there is a thred-bare soul. 2. These are corruptible: *Riches are not for ever*, as the wise man saith *. Heaven is a place where gold and silver will not go; a Believer is rich *towards God**, why then art thou discontented? hath not God given thee that which is better than the world? What if he doth not give thee the box, if he gives thee the Jewel? What if he denies thee farthings, if he pays thee in a better coyn? he gives thee gold, *viz.* spiritual mercies. What if the *water in the bottle* be spent? thou hast enough in the fountain: what needs he complain of the worlds *Emptiness*, that hath Gods *Fulness*? The Lord is *my portion* saith *David*, then let the lines fall where they will, in a *sick bed*, or *prison*, I will say, *The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea I have a goodly heritage.* 3. Art thou not heir to all the promises? hast thou not a reversion of heaven? when thou lettest go thy hold of natural life, art thou not sure of eternal life? hath not God given thee the earnest and first-fruits of glory?

* Prov. 27. 24.

* Luke 12. 21.

Psal. 16. 5.

ry? is not here enough to work the heart to Contentment?

What though some have a fraught
Of Cloves, and Nutmegs, and in Cinnamon sail?
If thou hast wherewithal to spice a draught,
When griefs prevail:

And for the future time art heir
To th' Isle of spices; is't not fair?

Herberts Poems.

SECT. III.

The third Argument to Contentation.

THe third Argument is, *Be content*, for else we confute our own prayers; We pray, *thy will be done*; It is the will of God that we should be in such a condition; he hath decreed it, and he sees it best for us: Why then do we murmur, and are discontented at that which we pray for? either we are not in good earnest in our prayer, which argues *hypocrisie*; or else we contradict ourselves, which argues *folly*.

SECT. IV.

The fourth Argument to Contentation.

THe fourth Argument to Contentment is, because now God hath his end, and Satan misseth of his end.

1. *God hath his end.* Gods end in all his cross Providences, is to bring the heart to submit and be content; and indeed this pleaseth God much; he loves to see his children satisfied with what portion he doth carve and allot them. It contents him to see us contented: Therefore let us acquiesce in Gods Providence; Now God hath his end.

2. *Satan misseth of his end.* The end why the Devil (though by Gods permission) did smite *Job*, in his body and estate, was to perplex his mind; he did vex his body on purpose that he might disquiet his *spirit*. He hoped to bring *Job* into a fit of discontent; and then, that he would in a passion break forth against God; but *Job* being so well contented with his condition, as that he falls to *blessing of God*, he did now dis-

disappoint Satan of his hope. *The Devil shall cast some of you into Prison* *. Why doth the Devil throw us into Prison? It is not so much the hurting our body, as the molesting our mind that he aims at; he would imprison our *Contentment*, and disturb the regular motion of our souls; this is the design: 'tis not so much the putting us into a *prison*, as the putting us into a *passion*, that he attempts; but by holy contentation, Satan loseth his prey, he misseth of his end. The Devil hath oft deceived us: the best way to deceive him, is by *contentation* in the midst of *tentation*; our contentment will discontent Satan. Oh, let let us not gratifie our Enemy! Discontent is the Devils *delight*; now it is as he would have it; he loves to warm himself at the fire of our passions. *Repentance* is the joy *of the Angels*, and *discontent* is the joy *of the Devil*. As the Devil danceth at discord, so he sings at discontent. The fire of our passions makes the Devil a bonefire; 'tis a kind of Heaven to him to see us torturing our selves with our own troubles; but by holy Contentment we frustrate him of his

* Rev. 2. 10.

his purpose, and do as it were put him out of countenance.

SECT. V.

The fifth Argument to Contentation.

THe next Argument is, by Contentment a Christian gets a victory over himself: for a man to be able to rule his own spirit *, this of all others is the most noble conquest *. Passion denotes weakness; to be discontented, is suitable to *flesh* and *blood*; but to be in every state content; reproached, yet *content*; imprisoned, yet *content*; this is above nature; this is some of that holy valour and chivalry, which only a divine spirit is able to infuse. In the midst of the affronts of the world to be patient, and in the changes of the world to have the spirit calmed; this argues μεγαλόψυχον θυμόν, as *Homer* speaks; this is a conquest worthy indeed of the Garland of honour. Holy *Job* devested and turned out of all, leaving his *Scarlet*, and embracing the *Dung-hill*, (a sad catastrophe!) yet he had learned Contentment.

* *Fortior est qui se, quàm qui fortissima vincit mœnia*, &c.

* Prov. 16. 32.

ment. 'Tis said *He fell upon the ground and worshipped* *. One would have thought he should have fallen upon the ground and *blasphemed*; no, he fell and *worshipped*. He adored Gods justice and holiness; behold the strength of grace! here was an humble submission, yet a noble conquest; he got the victory over himself. 'Tis no great matter for a man to yield to his own passions; this is facile and feminine; but to content himself in denying of himself, this is sacred.

*Job 1.20.

CHAP. VI.

The sixth Argument to Contentation.

THe sixth great Argument to work the heart to Contentment, is the consideration that all Gods providences, how cross or bloody soever, shall do a Believer good; *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God* *. Not only *all good things*, but *all evil things* work for good; and shall we be discontented at that which works for our good? Suppose our troubles are twisted together,

* Rom. 8. 28. πάντα συνεργεῖ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν.

ther, and sadly accented, as the Poet describes it:

Littora quot conchas, quot amœna Rosaria flores,
Quótve soporiferum grana papaver habet:
Sylva feras quot alit, quot piscibus unda natatur,
Et tenerum pennis aera pulsat avis;
Tot premor adversis, &c. Ovid.

What if sickness, poverty, reproach, Law-suits, *&c.* do unite and muster their forces against us? All shall work εἰς τὸ ἀγαθὸν, for good; our *maladies* shall be our *medicines*: and shall we repine at that which shall undoubtedly do us good? *Unto the upright there arise*
* Psalm 112. 4. *seth light in darkness* *. Affliction may be baptized *Marah*; 'tis bitter, but *Physical* Because this is so full of comfort, and may be a most excellent *Catholicon* against discontent; I shall a little expatiate.

Quæst. *Quæst.* It will be enquired how the evils of affliction work for good?

Answ. *R.* Several ways.

1. They are *disciplinary*; they teach us *.

us*. The Psalmist having very elegantly described the Churches trouble, *Psal.* 74. prefixeth this title to the *Psalm*, משכיל which signifies a *Psalm giving instruction*; that which *seals up instruction*, works for good. God puts us sometimes under the *black Rod*; but it is *virga disciplinaris*, a rod of discipline; *Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it* *. God makes our *Adversity* our *University*: Affliction is a *preacher*, *Blow the Trumpet in* Tekoah, *Jer.* 6. 1. The Trumpet was to preach to the people, as appears, *ver.* 6. *Be thou instructed, O Jerusalem.* Sometimes God speaks to the Minister, to lift up his voice like a *Trumpet* *; and here he speaks to the Trumpet, to lift up its voice like a *Minister*. Afflictions teach us

* *Schola crucis est schola lucis.*

* Mic. 9. 9.

* Jer. 6. 1.

* Isa. 58. 1.

1. *Humility*: commonly prosperous and proud; *corrections* are Gods *corrosives*, to eat out the proud flesh. Jesus Christ *is a Lilly of the valleys* *, he dwells in an humble heart; God brings us into the valley of tears, that he may bring us into the valley of humility; *Remembring my affliction, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me* *.

* Cant. 2. 1.

* Lam. 3. 19, 20. *me* *. When men are grown high God hath no better way with them than to brew them a *cup of wormwood*.

* Hos. 2. 8. Afflictions are compared to *thorns* *. Gods thorns are to prick the bladder of pride. Suppose a man run at another with a sword to kill him, accidentally it only lets out his impostume: this doth him good. Gods sword is to let out the impostume of pride: and shall that which makes us *humble*, make us discontented?

2. Afflictions teach us Repentance; *Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, I repented; and after I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh, &c.* * Repentance is the precious fruit that grows upon the *Cross*. When the fire is put under the Still; the water drops from the Roses: fiery afflictions make the waters of repentance drop and distill from the eyes, and is here any cause of discontent?

* Jer. 31. 18, 19.

3. Afflictions teach us to pray better *: *They poured out a Prayer when thy chastening was upon them* †. Before they would say a prayer; now they *poured* out a prayer; *Vigilabat in ceto, qui stertebat in navi*; *Jonah* was asleep in the ship, but awake and at Prayer

* *Mala quæ hic nos premunt, ad Deum confugere faciunt.*

* Isa. 26. 16.

prayer in the *Whales belly*. When God puts under the firebrands of affliction, now our hearts boyl over the more; God loves to have his children possessed with a *spirit of prayer*. Never did *David, the sweet singer of Israel*, tune his Harp more melodiously; never did he pray better, than when he was *upon the waters*. Thus afflictions do *indiscipline*, and shall we be discontented at that which is for our good?

2. Afflictions are *probatory* *. Gold is not the worse for being tryed, or Corn for being fanned. Affliction is the touch-stone of sincerity, it trys what metal we are made of; affliction is Gods *fan* and his *sieve*. 'Tis good that men be known; some serve God for a *livery*; they are like the Fisherman that makes use of his net, only to catch the fish: So they go a fishing with the net of Religion only to catch preferment; Affliction discovers these. The *Donatists* went to the *Goths*, when the *Arians* prevailed; Hypocrites will not sail in a storm; true grace holds out in the *winter season*. That is a *precious faith*, which, like the star, shines brightest in the darkest night.

* Psal. 66. 10, 11.

'Tis

'Tis good that our graces ſhould be brought to a trial; thus we have the comfort, and the Goſpel the honour; and why then diſcontented?

3. Afflictions they are *expurgatory*; theſe evils work for good, becauſe they work not ſin; and ſhall I be diſcontented at this? what if I have more *trouble*, if I have *leſs* ſin? the brighteſt day hath its clouds, the pureſt gold its droſs, the moſt refin'd ſoul hath ſome lees of corruption. The Saints loſe nothing in the furnace, but what they can well ſpare, *their droſs*: is not this for our good? why then ſhould we murmur? *I am come to ſend fire on the earth* *. *Tertullian* underſtands it of the fire of *affliction*. God makes this like the fire of the three children, which burned only their bonds, and ſet them at liberty in the furnace: So the fire of affliction ſerves to burn the bonds of iniquity. *By this therefore ſhall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and this is all the fruit, to take away his ſin* *. When affliction or death comes to a wicked man, it takes away his *ſoul*; when it comes to a godly man, it only takes away his *ſin*: is there then any cauſe why we ſhould be diſcontented?

*Luke 12. 49.

*Iſ. 27. 9.

tented? God ſteeps us in the briniſh water of affliction, that he may take out our ſpots. Gods people are his husbandry *; the ploughing of the ground kills the weeds, and the harrowing of the earth breaks the hard clods; Gods ploughing of us by affliction, is to kill the weeds of ſin, his harrowing of us is to break the hard clods of impenitency, that the heart may be the fitter to receive the ſeed of grace; and if this be all, why ſhould we be diſcontented?

* 1 Cor. 3. 6.

4. Afflictions do both exerciſe and increaſe grace.

Firſt, they *Exerciſe* grace: affliction doth breathe our graces; every thing is moſt in its excellency, when it is moſt in its exerciſe. Our grace, though it cannot be dead, yet it may be *aſleep*, and hath need of awakening. What a dull thing is the fire when it is hid in the embers, or the Sun when it is masked with a cloud? a ſick man is *living*, but not *lively*; afflictions quicken and excite grace. God doth not love to ſee grace in the eclipſe. Now faith puts forth its pureſt and moſt noble acts in times of affliction: God makes *the fall of the leaf the ſpring* of our Graces.

Graces. What if we are more *passive*, if grace be more active?

2. Afflictions do *increase* grace: as the wind serves to encrease and blow up the flame; so do the windy blasts of affliction augment and blow up our graces: grace spends in the furnace, but it is like the *widows oyl in the cruse*, which did encrease by pouring out. The torch when it is beaten, burns brightest, so doth grace when it is exercised by sufferings. Sharp frosts nourish the good Corn, so do sharp afflictions grace; some plants grow better in the shade than in the Sun: as the *Bay* and the *Cypress*. The shade of adversity is better for some, than the Sun-shine of prosperity. *Naturalists* observe, that the *Colewort* thrives better when it is watered with salt water, than with fresh; so do some thrive better in the salt water of affliction; and shall we be discontented at that which makes us grow and fructifie more?

5. These afflictions do bring more of Gods immediate presence into the soul. When we are most assaulted, we shall be most assisted, *I will be with him in trouble**. It cannot be ill with

*Ps. 15.

that

that man, with whom God is by his powerful presence in supporting, and his gracious presence in sweetning the present tryal. God will be with us in trouble, not only to *behold* us, but to *uphold* us; as he was with *Daniel* in the *Lyons den*, and the three Children *in the Furnace*. What if we have more trouble than others, if we have more of God with us than others have? we never have sweeter smiles from Gods face, than when the World begins to look strange; *Thy Statutes have been my Songs*, where? not when I was upon the throne, but *in the house of my Pilgrimage* †. We read, *The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire* †? but in a metaphorical and spiritual sense: when the wind of affliction blows upon a Believer, God is in the wind; when the fire of affliction kindles upon him, God is in the fire, *viz.* to sanctifie, to support, to sweeten. If God be with us, the furnace shall be turned into a festival, the prison into a Paradise, the earthquake into a joyful dance. Oh why should I be discontented, when I have more of Gods company?

† Ps. 119. 54.

† 1 Kings 12. 11.

6. These

6. These evils of affliction are so good, as they bring with them Certificates of Gods love, and are evidences of his special favour. Affliction is the Saints livery, 'tis a badge and cognizance of Honour; That the God of glory should look upon a Worm, and take so much notice of him, as to afflict him rather than lose him, is an high act of Favour. God's rod is *Sceptrum Regale*; a *Scepter of dignity*. *Job* calls Gods afflicting of us, *his magnifying* of us *. Some men's prosperity hath been their shame, when others affliction hath been their crown.

*Job 7.17.

7. These afflictions work for our good, because they work for us *a far more exceeding weight of glory* *. That which works for my glory in Heaven, works for my good; we do not read in Scripture that any mans Honour and Riches do work for him a *weight of glory*, but afflictions do; and shall a man be discontented at that which works for his glory? The heavier the weight of affliction, the heavier the weight of glory; not that our sufferings do merit glory (as the Papists do wickedly gloss) but though they are

* 2 Cor. 4. 16.

are not *causa*, they are *via*, they are not the cause of our crown, yet they are the way to it, and God makes us as he did our Captain, *perfect through sufferings* *; and shall not all this make us contented with our condition? Oh I beseech you look not upon the *evil* of affliction, but the *good*. Afflictions in Scripture, are called *visitations* *, the word in the Hebrew פקד to *visit*, is taken in a *good* sense as well as *bad*: Gods afflictions are but *friendly visits*; behold here Gods rod is like *Aarons rod* blossoming, and *Jonathans rod*; it hath Honey at the end of it. Poverty shall starve our sins *; the sickness of the body shall cure a sin-sick soul: O then instead of murmuring and being discontented, *bless the Lord*; hadst thou not met with such a rub in the way, thou mightest have gone to Hell and never stopp'd.

* Heb. 2. 10.

* Job 7. 18.

* *Fœlix paupertas, beata miseria.*

SECT.

SECT. VII.

The seventh Argument to Contentation.

THe next Argument to Contentment is, consider the evil of discontent. Male-content hath a mixture of grief and anger in it, and both these must needs raise a storm in the soul. Have you not seen the posture of a sick man? sometimes he will sit upon his bed, by and by he will lye down, and when he is down he is not quiet; first he turns to one side, and then to the other, he is restless: this is just the emblem of a discontented spirit, the man is not sick, yet he is never well, sometimes he likes such a condition of life, and when he hath it, yet he is not pleased, he is soon weary; and then another condition of life; this is *an evil under the Sun.*

Evil of discontent.

Now the evil of Discontent appears in three things.

1. The *sordidness* of it, it is unworthy of a Christian.

First, it is unworthy of his profession. It was the saying of an Heathen;

Bear

Bear thy condition quietly, *nosce te esse hominem*, know thou art *a man* * : So I say, Bear thy condition contentedly, *nosce te esse Christianum*, know thou art a *Christian*. Thou professest to live by Faith; what, and not content? Faith is a Grace that doth *substantiate* things *not seen* *, Faith looks beyond the creature, it feeds upon promises, Faith lives not by *Bread alone*. When the water is spent in the *bottle*, Faith knows whither to have recourse: now to see a Christian dejected in the want of visible supplies, and recruits, where is Faith? Oh, saith one, my estate in the world is down, I, and which is worse, thy Faith is down. Wilt thou not be contented, unless God let down the vessel to thee, as he did to *Peter*, wherein were all manner of *Beasts of the earth, and Fowls of the air* *? must you have first and second course? this is like *Thomas, unless I put my finger into the print of the nails, I will not believe* *. So, unless thou hast a sensible feeling of outward comforts, thou wilt not be content. True Faith will *trust* God where it cannot *trace* him, and will adventure upon Gods

* *Fer mansuete fortunam tuam, nosce te esse hominem.* Tull.

* Heb. 11. 1.

* Act. 10. 12.

* Joh. 20. 25.

bond, though it hath nothing in view. You who are discontented because you have not all you would, let me tell you, either your Faith is a *non entity*, or at best but an *embryo*; 'tis a *weak Faith* that must have Stilts and Crutches to support it: Nay, discontent is not only below Faith, but below Reason; why are you discontented? is it because you are dispossessed of such comforts? well, and have you not reason to guide you? doth not reason tell you, that you are but *tenants at will?* and may not God turn you out when he please? You hold not your estate *jure*, but *gratis*; not by a juridical right, but upon favour and courtesie.

2. It is unworthy of the *relation* we stand in to God; a Christian is invested with the title and priviledge of *sonship** ; he is an heir of the Promise: Oh consider, the lot of free Grace is fallen upon thee, thou art nearly allied to Christ, and of the blood royal; thou art advanced, in some sense, above the Angels, *why then art thou, being the Kings Son, lean from day to day**? 2 Sam. 13. 4. Why art thou discontented? O how unworthy is this? as if the heir to some great Monarch should

* Eph. 1. 5.

* 2 Sam. 13. 4.

ſhould go pining up and down, becauſe he may not pick ſuch a flower.

2. Conſider the *ſinfulneſs* of it; which appears in three things,

The second evil of discontent.

The cauſes
The concomitants } of it.
The conſequences

1. It is ſinful in the *cauſes*; which are theſe.

1. *Pride.* He that thinks highly of his deſert, uſually eſteems meanly of his condition; a diſcontented man is a proud man, he thinks himſelf *better* than others; therefore finds fault with the Wiſdom of God that he is not *above* others *. Thus the thing *formed* ſaith to him that *formed* it, *Why haſt thou made me thus** ? Why am I not higher? Diſcontents are nothing elſe but the æſtuations and boilings over of pride.

* *Nec quenquam jam ferre poteſt* Cæſarve *priorem* Pompeiuſve *parem*—— Lucan. l. 1. Pharſal.

* Rom. 9. 20.

2. The ſecond cauſe of diſcontent is envy, which *Auguſtine* calls *vitium diabolicum*, the ſin of the Devil. Satan envied *Adam* the glory of Paradiſe, and the robe of innocency: he that envies

vies what his neighbour hath, is never contented with that portion which Gods providence doth parcel out to him *: as envy stirs up *strife*, (this made the Plebeian faction so strong amongst the *Romans*) so it creates *discontent*; the envious man looks so much upon the blessings which another enjoys, that he cannot see his own mercies, and so doth continually vex and torture himself. *Cain* envyed that his brothers sacrifice was accepted, and his rejected, hereupon he was discontented, and presently murderous thoughts began to arise in his Heart.

* *Fertilior seges est alienis semper in agris Vicinumq; pecus grandius uber habet.* Ovid.

3. The third cause is *Covetousness*. This is a radical sin. Whence are vexing Law-suits, but from discontent? and whence is discontent, but from covetousness? *Covetousness* and *contentedness* cannot dwell in the same Heart. *Avarice* is an *heluo*, that is never satisfied. The covetous man is like *Behemoth*; *Behold, he drinketh up a river, he trusteth that he can draw up* Jordan *into his mouth* *. There are four things (saith *Solomon*) say, *It is not enough*, I may add a fifth, *The Heart of a covetous man he* is still craving. Covetousness is like a Wolf in the breast, which

* Job 40. 23.

which is ever feeding; and because a man is not satisfied, he is never content.

4. The fourth cause of Discontent is *Jealousie*, which is sometimes occasioned through melancholy, and sometimes misapprehension. The spirit of jealousie causeth *this evil spirit.* Jealousie *is the rage of a man* *, and oft, this is nothing but *suspicion* and *fancy*, yet such as creates real discontent. * Prov. 6. 34.

5. The fifth cause of discontent is *distrust*, which is a great degree of Atheism. The discontented person is ever distrustful. *The Hill of provision* grows low; I am in these straits and exigences, can God help me? *Can he prepare a Table in the Wilderness*? sure he cannot. My estate is exhausted, can God recruit me? My Friends are gone, can God raise me up more? sure the arm of his power is shrunk. I am like the *dry fleece*, can any water come upon this fleece? *If the Lord would make windows in Heaven, might this thing be* *? Thus the *Anchor of Hope*, and *the shield of faith* being cast away, the soul goes pining up and down. * 1 Kings 7. 2.

Discontent is nothing else but the *Echo* of unbelief; and remember *distrust* is worse than *distress*.

2. Discontent is evil in the concomitants of it, which are two.

1. Discontent is joined with a *sullen melancholy*; A Christian of a right temper, should be ever chearful in God; *Serve the Lord with gladness* *. A sign the oyl of grace hath been poured into the Heart, when *the oyl of gladness* shines in the countenance. Chearfulness credits Religion; how can the discontented person be chearful? Discontent is a dogged sullen humour; because we have not what we desire, God shall not have a good word or look from us; as the Bird in the cage, because she is pent up, and cannot fly into the open air, therefore beats her self against the cage, and is ready to kill her self. Thus that peevish Prophet; *I do well to be angry to the death* *.

* Ps. 100. 5.

* Jonah 4.

2. Discontent is accompanied with *unthankfulness*; because we have not all we desire, we never mind the mercies which we have; we deal with God, as the Woman of *Sarepta* did with the Prophet; the Prophet *Elijah* had been

a

a means to keep her alive in the famine; for it was for his sake, that her *meal in the barrel*, and her *oyl in the cruse* failed not; but assoon as ever her Son dies, she falls into a passion, and begins to quarrel with the Prophet; *What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? art thou come to call my sins to remembrance, and to slay my Son* *? So ungratefully we deal with God: we can be content to receive mercies from God, but if he doth cross us in the least thing, then through discontent, we grow techy and impatient, and are ready to fly upon God? thus God loseth all his mercies *.

* 1 King. 17. 18.

We read in Scripture of the *thank offering* *. The discontented person cuts God short of this; the Lord loseth his *thank-offering*. A discontented Christian repines in the midst of mercies, as *Adam*, who sinn'd in the midst of *Paradise*. Discontent is a spider that sucks the poison of unthankfulness out of the sweetest flower of Gods blessings; and by a devilish chymistry extracts dross out of the most refined Gold. The discontented person thinks every thing he doth

* Φαῦλος ἀνὴρ πίθος ὃς τετρημμένος, εἰς ὃν ἀντλήσας Ἀνίλων τὰς χάρισας εἰς κενὸν ἐξέχεας. *Luc. Epig.*

* 2 Chron. 20. 30.

doth for God too much, and every thing God doth for him too little. Oh what a ſin is unthankfulneſs *! it is an accumulative ſin. What *Cicero* ſaith of *Parricide* †, I may ſay of *Ingratitude*; there are many ſins bound up in this one ſin: it is a voluminous wickedneſs; and how full of this ſin is *Diſcontent*? A diſcontented Chriſtian, becauſe he hath not all the world, therefore diſhonours God with the mercies which he hath. God made *Eve* out of *Adams* rib, to be an *helper* (as the Father ſpeaks ‡;) but the Devil made an arrow of this rib, and ſhot *Adam* to the Heart: So doth diſcontent take the rod of Gods mercy, and ungratefully ſhoot at him: Eſtate, Liberty, ſhall be employed againſt God. Thus it is oftentimes. Behold then how Diſcontent and Ingratitude are interwoven and twiſted one within another: thus diſcontent is ſinful in its concomitants.

* *Ingratus vitandus eſt ut dirum ſcelus, nec cogitari peſtilentius poteſt; nam tellus ipſa fœdius nihil creat.* Pet. Crinitus l. 2. Poem.

† *Qui occidit patrem plurima committit peccata in uno.*

‡ Chryſoſt.

3. Diſcontent is ſinful in its conſequences.

3. It is ſinful in its *Conſequences*; which are theſe;

1. It makes a man very unlike the ſpirit of God. The ſpirit of God is a *meek ſpirit*. The Holy Ghoſt deſcended in the likeneſs of a *Dove* *.

1.

* Mat. 3. 6.

A

A Dove is the emblem of meekneſs. A diſcontented ſpirit is not a meek ſpirit.

2. It makes a man like the Devil. 2
The Devil being ſwell'd with the poyſon of envy and malice; is never content: Juſt ſo is the Male-content. The Devil is an unquiet ſpirit, he is ſtill *walking about* *; 'tis his reſt to be walking: And herein is the diſcontented perſon like him; for he goes up and down vexing himſelf. *Seeking reſt, and finding none*, he is the Devils picture. *1Pet.5.8.

3. Diſcontent disjoints the ſoul, 3
it untunes the Heart for Duty; *Is any man afflicted let him pray* *. But, is any man *Diſcontented*; how ſhall he pray? *lift up pure hands without wrath* *. Diſcontent is full of wrath and paſſion; the Male content cannot lift up pure hands; he lifts up *leprous hands*; he poiſons his prayers; will God accept of a poiſoned ſacrifice? *Chryſoſtom* compares prayer to a fine Garland. Thoſe ſaith he, that make a Garland, their hands had need be clean; prayer is a pretious Garland, the Heart that makes it had need be clean; Diſcontent throws poiſon

* Jam. 5. 13.
* 1 Tim. 5. 8.

poison in the spring, (which was death among the *Romans.*) Discontent puts the Heart into a disorder and mutiny, and such a one cannot serve the Lord *without distraction.*

4. Discontent sometimes unfits for the very use of reason; *Jonah* in a passion of discontent, spake no better than blasphemy, and non-sense; *I do well*, said he, *to be angry to the death* *. What? to be angry with God; and to die for anger? sure he did not know well what he said. When discontent transports, then like *Moses*, we speak *unadvisedly with our lips.* This humour doth even suspend the very acts of reason.

* Jon. 4.8.

5. Discontent doth not only disquiet a mans self, but those who are near him. This evil spirit troubles *Families, Parishes, &c.* If there be but one string out of tune, it spoils all the musick. One discontented spirit makes jarrings and discords among others: 'Tis this ill humour that breeds quarrels and Law-suits. Whence is all our *Contention* but for want of *Contentation*? From whence *come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts* *? in particular from this

* Jam. 4.1.

lust

lust of Discontent? Why did *Absolom* raise a War against his Father, and would have taken off not only his *Crown*, but his *Head*? was it not his discontent? *Absolom* would be King. Why did *Ahab* stone *Naboth*? was it not discontent about the Vineyard? Oh this devil of discontent! Thus you have seen the sinfulness of it.

3. Consider the simplicity of it. I may say as the Psalmist, *Surely they are disquieted in vain* *: which appears thus.

3. *The simplicity of it.*

* Ps. 9. 6.

1. Is it not a vain simple thing to be troubled at the loss of that which is in its own nature perishing and changeable? God hath put a vicissitude into the creature; all the world rings changes: and for me to meet with inconstancy here, to lose a friend, estate, to be in a constant fluctuation, is no more than to see a flower wither, or a leaf drop off in Autumn. There is an *Autumn* upon every comfort, *a fall of the leaf*; Now it is extream folly to be discontented at the loss of those things which are so in their own nature loseable. What *Solomon* saith of *Riches*, is true of all things under the Sun, *They take wings*. *Noah*'s Dove brought

brought an Olive branch in its mouth; but presently flew out of the Ark, and never returned more: Such a comfort brings to us Honey in its mouth; but it hath wings; and to what purpose should we be troubled, unless we had wings to flie after and overtake it?

2. Discontent is an Heart-breaking; *by sorrow of the Heart the Spirit is broken**; It takes away the comfort of life. There is none of us but may have mercies if we can see them; now because we have not all we desire, therefore we will lose the comfort of that which we have already. *Jonah* having his Gourd smitten (a withering vanity,) was so discontented, that he never thought of his miraculous deliverance out of the Whales belly; he takes no comfort of his life, but wisheth that he might die. What folly is this? we must have all or none; herein we are like Children, that throw away the piece which is cut them, because they may have no bigger. Discontent eats out the comfort of life. Besides, it were well if it were seriously weighed how prejudicial this is even to our health: For

*Prov. 15. 13.

For discontent, as it doth discruciate the mind, so it doth pine the body; it frets as a moth, and by wasting the spirits, weakens the vitals; The pleurisie of Discontent brings the body into a consumption; and is not this folly?

3. Discontent does not ease us of our burden, but makes the Cross heavier. A contented spirit goes chearfully under its affliction. Discontent makes our grief as unsupportable, as it is unreasonable. If the leg be well, it can endure a fetter and not complain; but if the leg be sore, then the fetter troubles. Discontent of mind is the *sore* that makes the Fetters of affliction more grievous. Discontent troubles us more than the trouble it self, it steeps the affliction in Wormwood. When Christ was upon the Cross, the *Jews* brought him *Gall* and *Vinegar* to drink, that it might add to his sorrow. Discontent brings to a man in affliction Gall and Vinegar to drink, this is worse than the affliction it self. Is it not folly for a man to imbitter his own cross?

4. Discontent spins out our troubles the longer. A Christian is discontented

tented because he is in want; and therefore he is in want, because he is discontented; he murmurs because he is afflicted; and therefore he is afflicted, because he murmurs. Discontent doth delay and adjourn our mercies. God deals herein with us, as we use to do with our children; when they are quiet and cheerful, they shall have any thing: but if we see them cry and fret, then we with-hold from them: We get nothing from God by our discontent, but blows. The more the child struggles, the more it is beaten: When we struggle with God by our sinful passions, he doubles and trebles his strokes; God will tame our curst Hearts. What got *Israel* by their peevishness? they were within eleven days journey of *Canaan*, and now they were discontented, and began to murmur; God leads them a march of forty years long in the wilderness. Is it not folly for us to adjourn our own mercies? Thus you have seen the evil of discontent. I have been long upon this Argument; but *nunquam nimis dicitur, quod nunquam satis discitur.*

SECT.

SECT. VIII.

The eighth Argument to Contentation.

THe next Argument or motive to Contentment is this: why is not a man content with the competency which he hath? perhaps if he had more, he would be less content; covetousness is a dry drunkenness. The world is such, that the more we *have*, the more we *crave**; it cannot fill the Heart of man. When the fire burns, how do you quench it? not by putting oyl to the flame, or laying on more wood, but by withdrawing the fuel. When the appetite is enflam'd after riches, how may a man be satisfied? not by having just what he desires, but by withdrawing the *fuel*, *&c.* moderating and lessening his desires. He that is contented hath enough. A man in a fever or dropsie, thirsts; how do you satisfie him? not by giving him liquid things which will enflame his thirst the more, but by removing the cause, and

* *crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.*

and so curing his distemper. The way for a man to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his Heart lower.

SECT. IX.

The ninth Argument to contentation.

THe next Argument to Contentment is, *The shortness of life.* It is but a *vapour*, saith *James**. ὁ βίος τροχός*, life is a wheel ever running. The Poets painted Time with wings, to shew the volubility and swiftness of it. *Job* compares it to a swift *Post**, (our life rides post) and a *day*, not a *year*. It is indeed like a *day*, Infancy is as it were the *day-break*, *Youth* is the Sun-rising, *full growth* is the Sun in the Meridian, *old age* is Sun setting. *Sickness* is the *evening*, then comes the *night* of death. How quick is this day of life spent? oftentimes this Sun goes down at noon-day; life ends before the evening of old age comes; Nay, sometimes the Sun of life sets presently after Sun rising. Quickly after the dawning of Infancy,

* Jam. 4. 14.
* Πνεῦμα χρόνια. Sophocles.
* Phocylides.
* Job. 9. 25.

fancy, the night of death approaches. Oh, how ſhort is the life of man! The conſideration of the brevity of life may work the Heart to contentment. Remember thou art to be here but a day; *parem viæ, quid multùm viatici?* thou haſt but a ſhort way to go, and what needs a long proviſion for a ſhort way*? If a Traveller have but enough to bring him to his journeys end, he deſires no more. We have but a day to live, and perhaps we may be in the twelfth hour of the day; why, if God give us but enough to bear our charges till night, it is ſufficieut. Let us be content. If a man let the Leaſe of an houſe or Farm, but for two or three days, and he ſhould fall a building and planting, would he not be judged very indiſcreet? So when we have but a ſhort time here, and death calls us preſently off the ſtage; to thirſt immoderately after the world, and pull down our ſouls to build up an eſtate, is it not extream folly? Therefore as *Eſau* ſaid once in a *profane ſenſe*, concerning his birth-right; *Lo, I am at the point to die, and what profit ſhall this birth-right do to me?* So let a Chriſtian ſay in a *Religious ſenſe*, Lo, I am even

* *Quid opus eſt ad brevem vitam longis opibus?* Hyper.

even at the point of death, my gra[illegible] is going to be made, and what goo[illegible] will the world do me? If I have bu[illegible] enough till *Sun setting*, I am content.

SECT. X.

The tenth Argument to Contentation.

THe tenth Argument or Motive to Contentment is, Consider seriously the nature of a prosperous condition. There are in a prosperous estate three things.

1. *Plus molestiæ.*

1. *Plus Molestiæ*, more trouble. Many who have abundance of all things to enjoy, yet have not so much content and sweetness in their lives, as some that go to their hard labour. Sad, solicitous thoughts do often attend a prosperous condition; *Care* is the *malus genius*, or evil spirit which haunts the rich man, and will not suffer him to be quiet. When his Chest is full of Gold, his Heart is full of care, either how to *manage*, or how to *encrease*, or how to *secure* what he hath gotten. Oh the troubles and perplexities that do wait upon prosperity! The worlds high-

gh-seats are very uneasie; Sun-shine pleasant, but sometimes it scorch-th with its heat; the Bee gives Ho-ey, but sometimes it stings: Prospe-ity hath its sweetness, and also its ting. *Competency with Contentment is ar more eligible.* Never did *Jacob* sleep etter than when he had the Heavens or his Canopy, and an hard stone for is pillow. A large voluminous estate is ut like a long trailing Garment, which is more troublesome than useful.

2. In a prosperous condition there is *plus periculi*, more danger; and that wo ways. 2. *Plus periculi.*

First, *Ex parte ipsius*, in respect of a mans self. The rich mans *Table is oft his snare*; he is ready to ingulph himself too deep in these sweet waters *. In this sense it is hard to know how to *abound*. It must be a strong brain that bears heady Wine; he had need have much Wisdom and Grace that knows how to bear an high condition; either he is ready to kill himself with care, or surfeit himself upon luscious delights. Oh the hazard of *Honour*, the damage of dignity! Pride, Security, Rebellion, are the three worms that breed of plenty *. The pastures of prospe-

* *Magna fœlicitatis est à fœlicitate non vinci.* Aug. de verb. Dom. c. 13.

* Deut. 32. 15.

prosperity are rank and surfeiting. How soon are we broken upon the soft pillow of ease †? Prosperity is often a *trumpet* that *sounds* a *retreat*, it calls men off from the pursuit of Religion. The Sun of prosperity oft dulls, and puts out the fire of zeal. How many souls hath the *pleurisie of abundance* kill'd †? They that *will be rich*, fall into snares †. The world is bird-lime at our feet, it is full of *Golden sands*, but they are *quick sands*. Prosperity like smooth *Jacob*, will supplant and betray; a great estate without much vigilancy will be a thief to rob us of Heaven; such as are upon the pinacle of honour, are in most danger of falling.

† Πλείους γὰρ ἡ περιουσία ἐκτραχηλίζει ἢ ἡ ἐνδεία. Theophylact.

† *Plurimi sunt qui paupertate positi non habent patientiam; & qui abundantiam, non habent temperantiam,* Remigus.

† 1 Tim. 6. 10.

Sæpius ventis agitatur ingens
Pinus, & celsa graviore casu
Decidunt turres; feriúntque summos
Fulmina montes, &c.
Hor. car. l. 2. Od. 10.

A lower estate is less hazardous. The little Pinnace rides safe by the shore, when the gallant ship advancing with its mast and top-sail, is cast away. *Homo victus in Paradiso, victor in stercore.*

Adam

Adam in Paradise was overcome, when *Job* on the dung-hill was a conquerour. *Sampson* fell asleep on *Dalilah*'s lap: some have fallen so fast asleep on the lap of ease and plenty, that they have never awaked till they have been in Hell†. The worlds *fawning* is worse than its *frowning*; and it is more to be feared when it smiles, than when it thunders†. Prosperity in Scripture is compared to a candle: *Job* 29. 3. *When his candle shined upon my Head.* How many have burnt their wings about this candle! *Segetem ubertas nimia sternit, rami onere franguntur, ad maturitatem non permittit nimia fœcunditas*†: The corn being over-ripe sheds, and fruit when it mellows, begins to rot; When men do mellow with the Sun of prosperity, commonly their souls begin to rot in sin. *How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*†? His golden weights keep him from ascending up *the hill of God*; and shall we not be content, though we are placed in a lower Orb? What if we are not in so much bravery, and gallantry as others? we are not in so much danger; as we want the honour of the world, so

† *Turpi fregerunt sæcula luxu molles, &c.* Juven. 6. Sat.

† *Periculosior est mundus blandiens quam fulminans.* Aug.

† Sen. ad Lucilium. *Ep.* 80.

† Luk. 18. 24.

so the temptations. Oh the abundance of danger that is in abundance! We see by common experience that *Lunaticks*, when the Moon is declining, and in the wane, are sober enough, but when it is in the full, they are more wild and exorbitant: When mens estates are in the wane, they are more serious about their souls, more humble; but when it is the *full of the Moon*, and they have abundance, then their hearts begin to swell with their estates, and are scarce themselves. Those that write concerning the several *Climates*, observe that such as live in the Northern parts of the World, if you bring them into the South part, they lose their stomachs, and die quickly; but those that live in the more Southern hot Climates, bring them into the North, and their stomachs mend, and they are long lived: Give me leave to apply it; bring a man from the cold starving climate of poverty, into the hot Southern climate of prosperity, and he begins to lose his appetite to good things, he grows weak, and a thousand to one if all his Religion doth not dye; but bring a Christian from the South to the North, from a rich flourishing

estate

ate into a jejune low condition, let him come into a more cold and hungry air, and then his stomach mends, he hath better appetite after heavenly things, he hungers more after Christ, he thirsts more for grace, he eats more at one meal of the bread of life, than at six before; this man is now like to live and hold out in his Religion; be content then with a *modicum*; if you have but enough to pay for your passage to Heaven, it sufficeth.

2. A prosperous condition is dangerous *ex parte vicini*, in regard of others: a great estate for the most part draws * envy to it *, whereas in *parvis quies*. *David a Shepherd* was quiet; but *David a Courtier* was pursued by his enemies: envy cannot endure a superiour: an envious man knows not how to live, but upon the ruines of his neighbour; he raiseth himself higher, by bringing others lower. Prosperity is an eye-sore to many. Such sheep as have most wool are soonest fleeced. The barren tree grows peaceably; no man meddles with the Ash or Willow; but the Apple-tree aud the Damasin shall have many rude Suitors. Oh then be content

* Gen. 26. 12, 13, 14.
* *Felicitas semper subjecta est invidiæ.* Laert. Diogenes *de vit. Philos.*

tent to carry a lesser sail; he that hath less *revenues*, hath less *envy*; such as bear the fairest frontispiece, and make the greatest shew in the world, are the *white* for envy and malice to shoot at.

3. *Plus recensionis.* 3. A prosperous condition hath in it *plus recensionis*, a greater reckoning; every man must be responsible for his talents. Thou that hast great possessions in the world, dost thou trade thy estate for Gods glory? Art thou *rich in good works?* Art thou a κοινὸν ἀγαθόν; Grace makes a *private person* a *common good*. Dost thou disburse thy money for publick uses? it is lawful (in this sense) to put out our money to use. Oh let us all remember, an estate is a *depositum*: we are but Stewards, and our Lord and Master will e're long say, *Give an account of your stewardship*: the greater our estate, the greater *our charge*: the more our revenues, the more our reckonings. You that have a lesser Mill going in the world, be content; God will expect less from you, where he hath sowed more sparingly.

SECT.

SECT. XI.

The eleventh Argument to Contentation.

THe eleventh Argument is the example of those who have been eminent for Contentation. *Examples* are usually more forcible than *Precepts*. *Abraham* being call'd out to hot service, and such as was against flesh and blood, was content. God bids him offer up his Son *Isaac* *; this was a great work: *Isaac* was *filius senectutis*, the Son of his old age; *filius dilectionis*, the son of his love; *filius promissi*, the son of the promise: Christ the Messiah was to come of his line, *In Isaac shall thy seed be blessed*; so that to offer up *Isaac*, seemed not only to oppose *Abrahams* reason, but his *faith* too; for if *Isaac* die, the world (for ought he knew) must be without a Mediator: Besides, if *Isaac* be sacrificed, was there no other hand to do it but *Abrahams*? must the Father needs be the executioner? must he that was the Instrument of giving *Isaac* his being, be the Instrument of taking it

*Gen. 22. 2.

 away?

away? yet *Abraham* doth not dispute or hesitate, but believes against *hope*, and is content with Gods prescription. So, when God called him to *leave his*
* Heb. 11. 1. *countrey* *, he was content. Some would have argued thus: What? leave all my friends, my native soil, my brave situation, and go turn Pilgrim? *Abraham* is content: besides *Abraham* went blindfold, *he knew not whither he*
* Vers. 8. *went* *. God held him in suspence, he must go wander he knows not where; and when he doth come to the place God had laid out for him, he knows not what oppositions he shall meet with there; the world doth seldom cast a favourable aspect upon strangers *, yet he is content, and obeys;
* Gen. 32. 16. *He sojourned in the land of promise* *, be-
* Heb. 11. 9. hold a little his pilgrimage. First, he goes to *Charan*, a City in *Mesopotamia*; when he had sojourn'd there a while, his Father dyes; then he removes to *Sichem*, then to *Bethlem* in *Canaan*; there a famine ariseth; *then* he went down to *Egypt*; after that he returns into *Canaan*, when he came there ('tis true he had a promise) but he found nothing to answer expectation; he had not there one foot of Land,

but

but was an exile: in this time of his sojourning he buried his wife; and as for his dwellings, he had no sumptuous buildings, but led his life in poor cottages; all this was enough to have broken any mans heart. *Abraham* might think thus with himself, is this the land I must possess? here is no probability of any good; *all things are against me*: well, is he discontented? no; God saith to him, *Abraham* go, leave thy Countrey; and this word was enough to lead him all the world over; he is presently upon his march; here was a man had learned to be content. But let us descend a little lower, to Heathen * *Zeno* (of whom *Seneca* speaks) who had once been very rich, hearing of a shipwrack, and that all his goods were drowned at Sea; Fortune, saith he, (he spake in an Heathen dialect) hath dealt well with me; and would have me now to study Philosophy *; he was content to change his course of life, to leave off being a Merchant, and turn Philosopher. And if an Heathen said thus, shall not a Christian much more say, when the world is drained from him, *Jubet Deus mundum derelinquere & Christum expeditius sequi*,

* Socrates *Philosophorum luculentissimus pauper semper nudis pedibus incedens, sordido palliolo contentus honore omniaque terrena contemnens*, Plut.

* *Jubet me fortuna expeditius Philosophari.* Seneca

God would have me to leave off following the world, and ſtudy Chriſt more, and how to get to Heaven? Do I ſee an Heathen contented, and a Chriſtian diſquieted*? How did Heathens vilifie thoſe things which Chriſtians magnifie? though they knew not God, or what true happineſs meant, yet would ſpeak very ſublimely of a *Numen* or Deity, and of the life to come, as *Ariſtotle* and *Plato*; and for those *Elyzian* delights which they did but fanſie, they undervalued and contemned the things here below; it was the doctrine they taught their Scholars, and which ſome of them practiſed, that *men ſhould ſtrive to be contented with a little*; they were willing to make an exchange; to have leſs good, and more learning: and ſhall not we be content then to have leſs of the world, ſo we may have more of Chriſt? May not Chriſtians bluſh to ſee Heathens content with a *viaticum*, ſo much as would recruit nature, and to ſee themſelves ſo tranſported with the love of earthly things, that if they begin a little to abate, and the *bill of proviſion* grows ſhort, they murmur, and are like *Micah*, *Have ye taken away my*

* *Pudeat, pudeat illos nomine tenus Chriſtianos quibus quod ad hanc rem attinet, Ethnici rectius ſapuerunt.* Hyp.

my gods, and do ye ask me what I ail *? Have Heathens gone so far in contentation? and is it not sad for us to come short of them that came short of Heaven? These *Heroes* of their time, how did they embrace death it self? *Socrates* dyed in prison, *Hercules* was burnt alive, *Cato* (whom *Seneca* calls * the lively image and portraicture of ventue) thrust through with a Sword; but how bravely, and with what contentment of Spirit did they dye? Shall I, saith *Seneca*, weep for *Cato*, or *Regulus*, or the rest of those Worthies that dyed with so much valour and patience? Did not cross providences make them to alter their countenance, and do I see a Christian appalled and amazed? Did not death affright them? and doth it distract us? Did the spring-head of Nature rise so high? and shall not Grace, like the *waters of the Sanctuary*, rise higher? We that pretend to live by faith may we not go to School to them who had no other Pilot but reason to guide them? nay, let me come a step lower, to creatures void of reason; we see every creature is contented with its allowance; the beasts with

* Judg. 18. 24.

* *Virtutum viva imago.* Sen.

their provender, the birds with their nests, they live only upon providence; and shall we make our selves below them? let a Christian go to School to the Ox and the Ass to learn contentedness; we think we never have enough, and are still laying up, the fowls of the air do not lay up, *they reap*
Mat. 6. 26. *not, nor gather into barns* *; it is an argument which Christ brings, to make Christians contented with their condition; The birds do not lay up, yet they are provided for, and are contented; *Are ye not* (saith Christ) *much better than they?* but if you are discontented, are ye not much worse than they? let these examples quicken us.

SECT. XII.

The twelfth Argument to Contentation.

THe twelfth argument to Contentment is, Whatever change or trouble a child of God meets with, it is all the Hell he shall have. Whatever eclipse may be upon his name, or estate, I may say of it, as *Athanasius* of his banishment, it is *nubecula citò transitura,*

ſura, a little cloud which will ſoon be blown over; and then his gulf is ſhot, his Hell is paſt.

Albus ut obſcuro detergit nubila cœlo
Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres
Perpetuos; ſic tu ſapiens finire memento
Triſtitiam, Hor. *Ode* 7. 1.

Death begins a wicked mans Hell, but it puts an end to a godly mans Hell. Think with thy ſelf, what if I endure this? it is but a *temporary Hell*; indeed if all our Hell be here, it is but an eaſie Hell. What is the cup of Affliction to the cup of Damnation? *Lazarus* could not get a crumb; he was ſo diſeaſed, that the dogs took pity on him, and (as if they had been his Phyſicians) *licked his ſores*; but this was an eaſie Hell, the *Angels* quickly fetch'd him out of it. If all our Hell be in this life, in the midſt of this Hell we may have the love of God, and then it is no more *Hell*, but *Paradiſe*. If our Hell be here, we may ſee to the bottom of it, it is but skin-deep, it cannot touch the ſoul, and we may ſee to the *end* of it: 'tis an Hell that is ſhort lived *: After a wet night of Affliction comes a bright morning of the

* *Nocte pluit tota, redeunt ſpectacula mane.*

the Resurrection; if our lives be short, our tryals cannot be long. As our *riches* take *wings* and flye, so do our *sufferings*; then let us be contented.

SECT. XIII.

The thirteenth Argument to Contentation.

THe last Argument to Contentment is this: To have a *competency*, and to want *Contentment*, is a great judgement. For a man to have a huge stomach *, that whatever meat you give him, he is still craving, and never satisfied; you do say, this is a great judgement upon the man: Thou who art *heluo pecuniæ*, a devourer of money, and yet never hast enough, but still cryest, *Give, give*, this is a sad judgement; *They shall eat and not have enough* *. *The throat* of a malicious man is an open *Sepulchre* *, so is the heart of a covetous man. Covetousness is not only *malum culpæ*, but *malum pœnæ*; it is not only a *sin*, but the *punishment* of a sin. 'Tis a secret curse upon a covetous person, he shall thirst and thirst, and never be satisfied, *He that*

* *Caninum appetitum.*

Hos. 4. 10.

Rom. 3. 13.

that loveth silver, shall not be satisfied with silver *; and is not this a curse? what was it but a severe judgement upon the people of *Judah*? *Ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink* *. Oh let us take heed of this *plague*. Did *Esau* say to his brother, I have *abundance* *, my brother, or as we translate it, *I have enough*? and shall not a Christian say so much more? 'Tis sad that our heart should be so dead to heavenly things, and as a spunge to suck in earthly. Let all that hath been said, work out minds to holy Contentation.

* Eccl. 5. 10.
* Hag. 1. 6.
* Gen. 33. 6.

CHAP. XII.

Three things inserted by way of Caution.

IN the next place I come to lay down some necessary Cautions: Though (I say) a man should be contented in every estate; yet there are three estates in which he must not be contented.

Caution 1.

1. He must not be contented in a *natural estate*; here he must learn not to be content. A sinner in his pure naturals is under the *wrath of God* *, and

* John 3. 16.

and shall he be content, when that dreadful Vial is going to be poured out? is it nothing to be under the scorchings of divine fury? *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* A sinner, as a sinner, is *under the power of Satan* *, and shall he in this *estate* be contented? who would be contented to stay in the Enemies quarters? while we sleep in the lap of sin, the Devil doth to us as the *Philistines* did to *Sampson*, cut the lock of our strength and put out our eyes *; be not content, O sinner, in this estate. For a man to be in debt body and soul, in fear every hour to be arrested and carried prisoner to Hell, shall he now be content? Here I preach against contentation. Oh get out of this condition; I would hasten you out of it, as the Angel hastened *Lot* out of *Sodom* *; there is the smell of the fire and brimstone upon you. The longer a man stays in his sin, the more sin doth strengthen †; 'tis hard to get out of sin when the heart as a garrison is victualled and fortifi'd. *A young plant is easily removed; but when the tree is once rooted,

Acts 26. 8.

2 Cor. 4.

Gen. 19. 5.

Heb. 3. 13.

† *Incere consuetudinem est dura pugna.* Aug.

Τὰ μὴ καθαρὰ τῶν σωμάτων ὀκδτον ἂν θρέψῃς, μᾶλλον βλάψεις. Hippocr. l. 2. aphor. 9.

rooted, there is no ſtirring of it: thou who art rooted in thy pride, unbelief, impenitency, it will coſt thee many a ſad pull e're thou art plucked out of thy *natural eſtate**. 'Tis an hard thing to have a brazen face and a broken heart. *He travelleth with iniquity**, *Pſal.* 7. 14. Be aſſured the longer you travel wth your ſins, the more and the ſharper pangs you muſt expect in the *new birth*. Oh be not contented with your natural eſtate. *David* ſaith, *Why art thou diſquieted, O my ſoul**? but a ſinner ſhould ſay to himſelf, Why art thou not diſquieted, O my ſoul? why is it that thou layeſt afflictions ſo to heart, and canſt not lay ſin to heart? 'Tis a mercy when we are diſquieted about ſin; a man had better be at the trouble of ſetting a bone, than to be lame, and in pain all his life; bleſſed is that trouble that brings the ſoul to Chriſt. 'Tis one of the worſt ſights to ſee a bad conſcience quiet; of the two, better is a fever, than a lethargy. I wonder to ſee a man in his natural ſtate content; what? contented to go to Hell?

* Jer. 6. 16

* Pſ. 7. 14

* Pſ. 43.

2. Though in regard of externals a man ſhould be in every ſtate content,

Caution

2. By

yet he must not be content in such a condition wherein God is apparently dishonoured. If a mans trade be such that he can hardly use it, but he must trespass upon a Command (and so *makes a trade of sin*) he must not content himself in such a condition; God never called any man to such a calling as is sinful; a man in this case had better knock off and divert; better lose some of his gain, so he may lessen some of his guilt. So for Servants that live in *a profane Family* (the suburbs of Hell) where the Name of God is not called upon, unless when it is taken in vain; they are not to content themselves in such a place, they are to come *out of the Tents of these sinners*; there is a double danger in living among the prophane.

1. Lest we come to be infected with the poison of their ill example. *Joseph* living in *Pharaohs* Court, had learned to *swear by the life of Pharaoh* *. We are prone to suck in example *, men take in deeper impressions by the *eye*, than by the *ear*. *Dives* was a bad pattern, and he had many brethren that seeing him sin, trod just in his steps: therefore, saith he, I pray thee

Gen. 42. 5.

Vivitur exemplis magis quam legibus.

thee send him *to my Fathers house; for I have five brethren, that he may testifie to them, that they come not into this place of torment.* *Dives* knew which way they went; it is easie to catch a disease from another, but not to catch health. The bad will sooner *corrupt* the good, than the good will *convert* the bad; take an equal quantity and proportion, so much sweet wine, with so much sowre vinegar; the vinegar will sooner sowre the wine, than the wine will sweeten the vinegar. Sin is compared to the *plague* *, and to *leaven* *, to shew of what a spreading nature it is. A bad master makes a bad servant. *Jacob*'s cattel by looking on the rods which were speckled and ring-strak'd, conceived like the rods: We do as we see others before us, especially *above* us. If the head be sick, the other parts of the body are distempered. If the Sun shine not upon the mountains, it must needs set in the valleys. We pray, *Lead us not into temptation*; and do we lead our selves into temptation? *Lot* was the worlds miracle, who kept himself fresh in *Sodoms* salt water.

Luke 16. 27, 28.

* 1 Kings 8. 38.
* 1 Cor. 5. 7.

2. By

2. By living in an evil Family, we are lyable to incur their punishment; *Pour out thy wrath upon the Families that call not upon thy Name* †. For want of pouring out prayer, the wrath of God was ready to be poured out. 'Tis dangerous living in the *Tents of Kedar.* When God sends his *flying roll*, written within and without with curses, it *enters into the house of the thief and perjurer, and it consumes the timber and the stones thereof* †. Is it not of sad consequence to live in a profane perjur'd Family, when the sin of the Governour pulls his house about his ears? If the stone and timber be destroyed, how shall the servant escape? And suppose God send not a *temporal roll* of curses in the Family, there is a *spiritual roll*, and that is worse †. Be not content to live where Religion dyes. *Salute the brethren, and* Nymphas, *and the Church which is in his house* †: the house of the godly is a *little Church*; the house of the wicked *a little hell* †. Oh incorporate your selves into a religious Family; the house of a good man is perfum'd with a blessing †. When the holy oyl of grace is poured on the head, the *savour* of this ointment sweetly

† Jer. 13. 25.

† Zac. 5. 4.

† Pro. 3. 33.

† Col. 4. 15.

† Pro. 7. 25.

† Pro. 3. 33.

sweetly diffuseth it self, and the *vertue* of it runs down upon the skirts of the family. Pious examples are very magnetical and forcible. *Seneca* said to his Sister, though I leave you not wealth, yet I will leave you a good example. Let us ingraff our selves among the Saints; by being often among the spices, we come to smell of them.

3. The third Caution is, though in every condition we must be content, yet we are not to content our selves with a *little grace*. Grace is the *best blessing*. Though we should be contented with a competency of estate, yet not with a competency of grace. It was the end of Christs Ascension to heaven, *to give gifts*; and the end of those gifts, *that we may grow up into him who is the head Christ* †. Where the Apostle distinguisheth between our *being* in Christ, and our *growing* in him: our ingraffing and our flourishing: be not content with a *modicum* in Religion. 3. *Caution.* † Ephes. 4. 15.

'Tis not enough that there be *life*, but there must be *fruit*. Barrenness in the Law was accounted a curse. The further we are from fruit, the nearer we are to cursing †. 'Tis a sad thing when men are fruitful only † Heb. 6. 8.

in

in the unfruitful works of darkness. Be not content with a dram or two of grace; next to a *Still-born*, a *starveling* in Christ is worst. Oh covet more grace, never think thou hast enough; it is *bona & honesta avaritia*; we are bid to *covet the best things* †; it is an heavenly ambition, when we desire to be high in Gods favour; a blessed contention, when all the strife is, who shall be the most holy. Saint *Paul*, though he was content with a little of the world, yet not with a little grace; he *reached forward*, and *pressed towards the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus* †. A true Christian is a *wonder*, he is the most contented, and yet the least satisfied: he is contented with a morsel of bread, and a little water in the Cruse, yet never satisfied with grace; he doth *anhelare*, pant and breathe after more; this is his prayer, Lord, more conformity to Christ, more communion with Christ; he would fain have Christs Image more lively pictured upon his soul. True grace is alwayes progressive: as the Saints are called *Lamps* and *Stars* in regard of their *light*; so *trees of righteousness* †

† 1 Cor. 12.

† Phil. 3. 14.

ness † for their growth; they are indeed like the tree of life, bringing forth several sorts of fruit.

† Isa. 61.3.

A true Christian grows, 1. *Formâ, in beauty.* Grace is the best complexion of the soul; it is at the first plantation like *Rachel*, fair to look upon; but still the more it lives, the more it sends forth its rayes of beauty. *Abrahams* faith was at first beautiful; but at last it did shine in its orient colours, and grew so illustrious, that God himself was in love with it, and makes his faith a pattern to all believers.

2. A true Christian grows *Suavitate*, in sweetness. A poisonful weed may grow as much as the Hyssop, or Rosemary; the Poppy in the field, as the Corn; the Crab, as the Pearmain; but the one hath a harsh sowre taste, the other mellows as it grows: An hypocrite may grow in outward dimensions, as much as a child of God, he may pray as much, profess as much; but he grows only in magnitude, he brings forth sowre grapes, his duties are leavened with pride, the other ripens as he grows; he grows in love, humility, faith, which do mellow and sweet-

en

en his duties, and make them cons off with a better relish. The believer grows as the flower, he casts a fragrancy and perfume.

3. A true Christian grows *Robore*, in *strength*; he grows still more *rooted* and *setled*. The more the tree grows, the more it spreads its root in the earth †; A Christian who is a plant of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, the longer he grows, the more he incorporates into Christ, and sucks spiritual juice and sap from him; he is a dwarf in regard of humility, but a gyant in regard of strength. He is strong to do duties, to bear burdens, to resist tentations.

† ἐριζω-μένοι. Col. 2. 7.

4. He grows *Vigore*, in the *exercise of his grace*; He hath not only oyl in his Lamps, but his Lamps are burning and shining. Grace is agile and dexterous. Christ's Vines do flourish †, hence we read of a *lively hope* †, and a *fervent love* †; here is the activity of grace. Indeed sometimes grace is as a sleepy habit in the soul, like sap in the Vine, not exerting its vigour; which may be occasion'd through spiritual sloth, or by reason of falling into some sin; but this is only *pro tempore*, for a while; the *spring* of grace will come, the *flowers will appear*;

† Cant. 6. 11.
† 1 Pet. 1. 3.
† 1 Pet. 1. 22.

ear; and the *Fig tree put forth her* *ten figs*. The fresh gales of the Spirit sweetly revive and refocillate grace. The Church of Christ, whose heart was *Garden*, and her graces as pretious *spices*, prayes for the heavenly breathings of the Spirit, that her sacred spices might flow out †. † Cant. 4. 16.

5. A true Christian grows *Incremental*, both in the kind and in the degree of grace. To his spiritual *living* he gets an augmentation: he adds to *faith*, *virtue*; to *vertue*, *knowledge*; to *knowledge*, *temperance*, &c. † here is grace growing in the *kind*; and he goes on *from faith to faith*†; there is grace growing in the *degree*. *We are bound to give thanks to God for you brethren, because your faith groweth exceedingly*; †ὑπεραύξανει it encreaseth over and above. And the Apostle speaks of those spiritual plants which were laden with Gospel fruit †, *Phil.* 1. 11. A Christian is compar'd to the *Vine* (an emblem of fruitfulness) he must bear full clusters; we are bid to *perfect* that which is *lacking in our faith*†. A Christian must never be so old as to be past bearing; he brings forth *fruit in his old age*†. An heaven-born plant is ever growing; he never thinks he grows

† 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6.
† Rom. 1. 17.
† 2 Thess. 11.
† Phil. 1. 11.
† 1 Thes. 3. 10.
† Psal. 92. 14.

grows enough; he is not content unless he add every day one cubit to his spiritual stature. We must not be content just with so much grace as will keep life and soul together; a dram or two must not suffice, but we must be still encreasing *with the encrease of God*†. We had need *renew* our strength as the *Eagle*†; our sins are renewed, our wants are renewed, our tentations are renewed, and shall not our *strength* be renewed? Oh be not content with the first *embryo* of grace, grace in its infancy, and minority. You look for degrees of glory; be you Christians of Degrees. Though a Believer should be contented with a *modicum* in his estate, yet not with a *modicum* in Religion. A Christian of the right breed labours still to excel himself, and come near unto that holiness in God, who is the original, the pattern and prototype of all holiness.

† Col. 2.9.

† Isa. 40. 31.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

Use 4.

Shewing how a Christian may know whether he hath learned this divine Art.

Use 4. THus having laid down these three Cautions, I proceed in the next place to an Use of Trial. 4. How may a Christian know that he hath learned this lesson of Contentment? I shall lay down some τεκμηρια or characters by which you shall know it. Use 4. Trial.

1. A contented spirit is a *silent spirit*. He hath not one word to say against God; I was *dumb* or *silent*, because *thou, Lord, didst it* †, Psal. 39. Contentment silenceth all dispute; *He sitteth alone and keepeth silence* †; There is a sinful silence, when God is dishonoured, his truth wounded and men hold their peace; this silence is a loud sin; and there is an *holy* silence, when the soul sits down quiet and content with its condition: When *Samuel* tells *Eli* that heavy message from God, that he would *judge his house, and that the iniquity* 1 Charact. † Psal. 39. † Lam. 3. 28.

of

of his Family should not be purged away with sacrifice for ever †; doth *Eli* murmur or dispute? No, he hath not one word to say against God; *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*†. A discontented spirit saith as *Pharaoh*, *Who is the Lord*? why should I suffer all this? why should I be brought into this low condition? *Who is the Lord*? But a gracious heart saith as *Eli*, *it is the Lord*, let him do what he will with me. When *Nadab* and *Abihu*, the sons of *Aaron*, had offered up *strange fire*, and *fire went from the Lord and devoured them* †, is *Aaron* now in a passion of discontent? No, *Aaron held his peace*†. A contented spirit is never angry, unless with himself for having hard thoughts of God. When *Jonah* said *I do well to be angry*; this was not a contented spirit, it did not become a Prophet.

† 1 Sam. 3. 13.

Vers. 18.

† Lev. 10. 1.

† Verse 3.

2 *Charact.* 2. A contented spirit *is a cheerful spirit*, the Greeks call it Εὐθυμία. Contentment is something more than *Patience*; for Patience denotes only submission †, Contentment denotes *cheerfulness*. A contented Christian is more than passive; he doth not only *bear the Cross*, but *take up the Cross* †. He looks upon God as a wise God; and whatever

† ὑπομένειν *significat adversitates sustinere.* Cypr. *item perseverare*, Casauh.

† Mat. 6. 24.

ever he doth, though it be not *ad voluntatem*, yet *ad sanitatem* †, it is in order to a cure: Hence the contented Christian is cheerful, and with the Apostle, *takes pleasure in infirmities, distresses, &c.* † He doth not only submit to Gods dealings, but rejoyce in them; he doth not only say, *Just is the Lord* in all that is befallen me; but *Good is the Lord*. This is to be contented. A sullen Melancholy is hateful; it is said, God loves a *cheerful Giver* †; I, and God loves a *cheerful Liver*. We are bid in Scripture not to be *careful*, but we are no where bid not to be *cheerful*. He that is contented with his condition, doth not abate of his spiritual joy; and indeed he hath that within him, which is the ground of cheerfulness; he carries a pardon sealed in his heart †.

† *Aug.*

† 2 Cor. 12. 10.

† 2 Cor. 9. 7.

† Mat. 9. 2.

3. A contented spirit, is a *thankful spirit* †. This is a degree above the other; *In every thing giving thanks* †. A gracious heart spies mercy in every condition, therefore hath his heart scrued up to thankfulness; others will bless God for prosperity, he blesseth him for affliction. Thus he reasons with himself, Am I in want? God sees it

3. *Charact.* Ἐν παντὶ εὐχαριστεῖτε.

†Job 1. 21.

† 1 Thes. 5.

it better for my ſpiritual health, ſometimes to be kept faſting; therefore he doth not only ſubmit, but is thankful. The malecontent is ever complaining of his condition; the contented ſpirit is ever giving thanks. Oh what height of grace is this! A contented heart is a *Temple*, where the praiſes of God are ſung forth, not a *Sepulchre*, wherein they are buried. A contented Chriſtian in the greateſt ſtraits hath his heart enlarged, and dilated in thankfulneſs. He oft contemplates Gods love in election; he ſees that he is a *monument* of mercy, therefore deſires to be a *pattern* of praiſe. There is always gratulatory muſick in a contented ſoul; the ſpirit of grace works in the heart like new wine, which under the heavieſt preſſures of ſorrow, will have a vent open for thankfulneſs; this is to be content.

4. He that is content, no condition comes amiſs to him; ſo it is in the Text, *in quocunque ſtatu, in whatever ſtate I am**. A contented Chriſtian can, *prout res exigit*, turn himſelf to any thing, either want, or abound. The people of

* Καὶ ὀλίγοις κεχρῆσθαι οἶδα, καὶ λίμον φέρειν καὶ ἐνδεῖν, καὶ περισσεύειν. Chryſoſt.

of *Israel* knew neither how to abound, nor yet how to want *; when they were in want, they murmured, *Can God prepare a Table in the wilderness?* and when they ate and were filled, then they lifted up the heel. *Paul* knew how to manage every estate: he could be either a note higher, or lower, he was (in this sense) an *Universalist*, he could do any thing that God would have him *: If he were in prosperity, he knew how to be thankful; if in adversity, he knew how to be patient; he was neither lift up with the one, nor cast down with the other, He could carry a greater sail, or lesser *; Thus a contented Christian knows how to turn himself to any condition. *Sicut bonus est dux & peritus, qui in quolibet exercitu operatur secundùm exigentiam ejus; & coriarius qui ex quolibet corio facit optimos sotu-*

* Οἱ Ἰσραηλῖται ὅτε πεινᾶν ἔδησαν, καὶ ἐλάλησαν γὰρ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ἔλεγον, Μὴ δυνήσεται ὁ Θεὸς ἑτοιμάσαι τραπέζαν; ἀλλ' ὅτε χορτάζεσθαι, ἔφαγον γὰρ καὶ ἀνεπλήσθησαν, καὶ ἀπελάκτισαν. Theophylact.

* *Similis est vita rotæ, in cujus modo infimæ, modo suprema parte versamur.* Aquinas.

* *Magna & rara virtus est inter epulas esurire, inter vestes algere, inter honores humiliari. Scivit* Hannibal *penuriam pati, nescivit abundare; nam deliciæ Capuanæ* Hannibalem *invictum enervarunt, & Romanis jam imbellem vincendum objecerunt.* Ber.

lares; *Ita Christianus sapiens, qui scit quolibet statu bene se gerere.* We have those who can be contented in *some estate*; but not in every estate: They can be content in a wealthy estate, when they have the streams of milk and honey; while Gods candle shines upon their head, now they are content; but if the wind turn and be against them, now they are discontented. While they have a silver crutch to lean upon, they are contented; but if God breaks this crutch, now they are discontented; but *Paul* had learned in every state to carry himself with equanimity of mind *: others could be content with their afflictions, so God would give them leave to pick and chuse. They could be content to bear *such* a cross; they could better endure sickness than poverty, or bear loss of estate, than loss of children; if they might have such a mans cross, they could be content; any condition but the present: this is not to be content. A contented Christian doth not go to chuse his Cross, but leaves God to chuse for him, he is con-

*Ἰσῳ ἦν τῇ ἐνδείᾳ ἐν τῇ πλησμονῇ, ὅτε ἐκεῖθεν πιεζόμενος, ὅτε ἐντεῦθεν χαυνούμενος. Chrysost.

content both for the *kind*, and for the *duration*. A contented ſpirit ſaith, Let God apply what medicine he pleaſeth, and let it lye on as long as it will; I know when it hath done its cure, and eaten the venome of ſin out of my heart, God will take it off again. In a word, a contented Chriſtian, being ſweetly captivated under the authority of the Word, deſires to be wholly at Gods diſpoſe, and is willing to live in that ſphere and climate where God has ſet him; and if at any time there hath been an inſtrument of doing noble and brave ſervice in the publick, he knows he is but a *rational tool*, a ſervant to authority, and is content to return to his former private condition of life. *Cincinnatus*, after he had done worthily, and purchaſed to himſelf great fame in his Dictatorſhip, did notwithſtanding afterwards voluntarily return to till and manure his four acres of Ground. Thus ſhould it be with Chriſtians, profeſſing *Godlineſs with contentment*; having ſerved *Mars*, not daring to offend *Jupiter*; leſt otherwiſe they diſcover only to the world a *bruitiſh valour*, being ſo untam'd and head-ſtrong, that when they have con-

Pet. Mart.

quered others, yet they are not able to rule their own spirits.

5. *Charact.* 5. He that is contented with his condition, to rid himself out of trouble, will not run himself into sin. I deny not but a Christian may lawfully seek to change his condition; so far as Gods providence doth go before, he may follow; but when men will not follow providence, but run before it, as he said, *This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait any longer* *? if God doth not open the door by his providence, they will break it open, and wind themselves out of affliction by sin, bringing their souls into trouble by bringing their estates out of trouble: This is far from holy Contentation, this is unbelief broken out into rebellion. A contented Christian is willing to wait Gods leisure, and will not stir till God open a door. As *Paul* said in another case, *They have beaten us openly, uncondemned, being* Romans, *and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out* *: So with reverence saith the contented Christian, God hath cast me into this condition; and though it be sad and trouble-

2 Kings 6.

* Acts 16. 37.

troublesome, yet I will not stir till God by a clear Providence fetch me out. Thus those brave spirited Christians, *Heb.* 11. 35. *They accepted not deliverance* *, that is, upon base dishonourable terms. They would rather stay in prison, than purchase their liberty by carnal compliance. *Estius* observes on the place, they might not only have had their enlargement, but been raised to honour, and put into offices of trust; yet the honour of Religion was dearer to them, than either liberty or honour. A contented Christian will not remove, till as the *Israelites* he see a *pillar of cloud and fire* going before him: *It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord* *. 'Tis good to stay Gods leisure, and not to extricate our selves out of trouble, till we see the star of Gods providence pointing out a way to us.

* Heb. 11.

* Lam. 3. 26.

CHAP. XIV.

Use 5.

Containing a Christian Directory, or Rules about Contentment.

Use 5. *Direction.*

Use 5. I Proceed now to an Use of Direction, to shew Christians how they may attain to this *Divine Art* of Contentation. Certainly it is feasible, others of Gods Saints have reached to it. St *Paul* here had it; and what do we think of those we read of in the little book of Martyrs, *Heb.* 11. who had tryals of *cruel mockings and scorchings*, who wandred about in *Desarts* and *Caves*, yet were contented; so that it is possible to be had. And here I shall lay down some Rules for holy Contentment.

SECT.

SECT. I.

1. Rule. *Advance Faith.*

ALL our disquiets do issue immediately from unbelief. 'Tis this that raiseth the storm of discontent in the heart. Oh set Faith a work; 'tis the property of Faith to silence our doubtings, to scatter our Fears, to still the heart when the passions are up. Faith works the heart to a sweet serene composure; 'tis not having *food* and *rayment*, but having *Faith*, which will make us content. Faith chides down passion; When Reason begins to sink, let Faith swim.

Quest. How doth Faith work Contentment? *Quest.*

Answ. 1. Faith shews the soul, that whatever its tryals are, yet it is from the hand of a Father; 'tis indeed a bitter cup, but *Shall I not drink the Cup which my Father hath given me to drink?* 'tis love to my soul; God *corrects* with the same love he *crowns* me; God is now training me up for heaven, he carves me, to make me a *polished* *Answ.*

shaft. These sufferings bring forth patience, humility, even the *peaceable fruits of righteousness* †. And if God can bring such sweet fruit out of a sowre stock, let him graft me where he please. Thus faith brings the heart to holy contentment.

† Heb. 12. 11.

2. Faith sucks the honey of Contentment out of the hive of the Promise. Christ is the Vine, the Promises are the clusters of Grapes that grow upon this Vine; and Faith presseth the sweet wine of Contentment out of these spiritual clusters of the Promises. I will shew you but one cluster; *The Lord will give grace and glory* †: here is enough for faith to live upon. The promise is the flower out of which Faith distils the spirits, and quintessence of divine Contentment. In a word, Faith carries up the soul, and makes it aspire after more noble and generous delights than earth affords, and to live *in* the world *above* the world †, would you lead contented lives: live up to the height of your Faith.

† Psal. 84. 11.

† *Discite in hoc mundo supra mundum esse.* Ambr.

SECT.

SECT. II.

2. Rule. *Labour for Assurance.*

OH let us get the interest clear'd between God and our own souls. *Interest* is a word much in use; a pleasing word; Interest in great friends, interest-money; Oh if there be an *interest* worth looking after, 'tis an interest between God and the soul; Labour to say, *My God.* To be without money and without friends, and without God too †, is sad; but he whose faith doth flourish into assurance, that can say, *I know in whom I have believed* †, (as St. *Paul*,) that man hath enough to give his heart contentment. When a mans debts are paid, and he can go abroad without fear of arresting, what contentment is this! Oh, let your title be cleared; if God be ours, whatever we want in the creature, is infinitely made up in him. Do I want bread? I have Christ the bread of life. Am I under defilement? his blood is like the trees of the sanctuary; not only for meat, but medicine †. If any thing

† Eph. 2. 12.

† 2 Tim. 1. 12.

† Ezek. 47. 12.

thing in the world be worth labouring for, it is to get ſound evidences that God is ours. If this be once cleared, what can come amiſs? No matter what ſtorms I meet with, ſo that I know where to put in for harbour. He that hath God to be his God, is ſo well contented with his condition, that he doth not much care whether he hath any thing elſe. To reſt in a condition where a Chriſtian cannot ſay, God is his God, is matter of *fear*: and if he can ſay ſo truly, and is not contented, is matter of *ſhame*. David *encouraged himſelf in the Lord his God*; it was ſad
1. Sam. 30. with him, *Zicklag* burnt, his wives taken captive, he loſt all, and like to have loſt his ſouldiers hearts too (for they *ſpake of ſtoning him*;) yet he had the ground of Contentment within him, *viz. an intereſt in God*, and this was a pillar of ſupportment to his ſpirit. He that knows *God is his*, and all that is in God is *for his good*; if this doth not ſatisfie, I know nothing will.

SECT.

SECT. III.

3. Rule. *Get an humble spirit.*

THe humble man is the contented man; if his estate be low, his heart is lower than his estate; therefore is contented. If his esteem in the world be low, he that is little in his own eyes, will not be much troubled to be little in the eyes of others. He hath a meaner opinion of himself, than others can have of him. The humble man studies his own unworthiness; he looks upon himself as *less than the least* of Gods mercies*, and then a *little* will content him. He crys out with *Paul*, that he is *the chief of sinners**; therefore doth not murmur, but admire: He doth not say his comforts are small, but his sins are great. He thinks it a mercy he is out of hell, therefore is contented. He doth not go to carve out a more happy condition to himself; he knows the worst piece God cuts him, is better than he deserves. A proud man is never contented, he is one that hath an high opinion of himself;

* Gen. 32. 10.

* 1 Tim. 1. 15.

ſelf; therefore under ſmall bleſſings is diſdainful, under ſmall croſſes impatient. The humble ſpirit is the contented ſpirit; if his croſs be light, he reckons it in the Inventory of his mercies; if it be heavy, yet takes it upon his knees, knowing that when his eſtate is worſer, it is to make him better. Where you lay humility for the foundation, Contentment will be the ſuperſtructure.

SECT. IV.

1 Tim. 3.9. 4. Rule. *Keep a clear conſcience.*

CONtentment is the *Manna* that is laid up in the *Ark* of good conſcience: Oh take heed of indulging any ſin. 'Tis as natural for guilt to breed diſquiet, as for putrid matter to breed vermine. Sin lies as *Jonah* in the Ship, it raiſeth a tempeſt. If duſt or motes be gotten into the eye, they make the eye water, and cauſe a ſoreneſs in it: if the eye be clear, then it is free from that ſoreneſs: If ſin be gotten into the conſcience, which is as the eye of the ſoul, then grief and dis-

disquiet breeds there: but keep the eye of conscience clear, and all is well. What *Solomon* saith of a good stomach, I may say of *a good conscience*, † *To the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet*; so to a good conscience every bitter thing is sweet; it can pick Contentment out of the *Cross*. Good conscience turns the waters of *Marah* into Wine. Would you have a quiet heart? get a smiling Conscience. I wonder not to hear *Paul* say, he was in every state content; when he could make that triumph, *I have lived in all good conscience unto this day* †. When once a mans reckonings are clear; it must needs let in abundance of contentment into the heart. Good conscience can suck contentment out of the bitterest drug; under slanders, *This is our rejoycing, the testimony of our conscience* †; in case of imprisonment, *Paul* had his prison-songs, and could play the sweet lesson of Contentment, when his feet were in the stocks †; one calls it *bona conscientia Paradisus*, the Paradise of a good conscience; and if it be so, then in prison we may be in Paradise. When the times are troublesome, good conscience makes a calm; If conscience be clear,

†Pro.27.7.

†Act.13.4.

† 2 Cor. 1. 12.

† Acts 16 25.

Augustine.

clear, what though the days be cloudy? Is it not a contentment to have a friend always by to ſpeak a good word for us? ſuch a friend is conſcience. Good conſcience, as *Davids Harp*, drives away the evil ſpirit of diſcontent. When thoughts begin to ariſe, and the Heart is diſquieted, Conſcience ſaith to a man as the *King* did to *Nehemiah*, *Why is thy countenance ſad* *? So ſaith Conſcience, haſt not thou the *ſeed of God in thee*? art not thou an *heir of the promiſe*? Haſt not thou a treaſure that thou canſt never be plundered of? Why is thy countenance ſad? Oh keep conſcience clear, and you ſhall never want contentment. For a man to keep the *pipes* of his body, the veins and arteries free from colds and obſtructions, is the beſt way to maintain health; ſo to keep conſcience clear, and to preſerve it from the obſtructions of guilt, is the beſt way to maintain contentment. Firſt, conſcience is pure, and then peaceable.

* Neh. 2. 2.

SECT.

SECT. V.

5. Rule. *Learn to deny your selves.*

LOok well to your affections, bridle them in. Do two things,

{ 1. Mortifie your desires.
{ 2. Moderate your delights.

1. *Mortifie your desires.* We must not be of the Dragons temper, who (they say) is so thirsty, that no water will quench his thirst; *Mortifie therefore your inordinate affection* *; in the Greek it is ἐπιθυμίαν κακὴν, your *evil affection*; to shew that our desires when they are inordinate, are *evil.* Crucifie your desires, νεκρώσατε, be as dead men; a dead man hath no appetite. * Col. 3. 5.

Quest. How should a Christian martyr his desires? *Quest.*

Answ. 1. Get a right judgement of the things here below: They are mean, beggarly things; *Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not**? Thy appetite must be guided by reason; the affections *Answ.* *Pro. 23. 5.

are

are the feet of the soul, therefore they must *follow* the judgement, not *lead it.*

2. Often seriously meditate of mortality; Death will soon crop those flowers which we delight in, and pull down the fabrick of those bodies which we so garnish and beautifie. Think when you are locking up your Money in your Chest, who shall shortly lock you up in your Coffin.

2. *Moderate your delights.* Set not your hearts too much upon any creature *. What we over-love, we shall over grieve; *Rachel* set her heart too much upon her children, and when she had lost them, she lost her self too: such a vein of grief was opened, as could not be stenched, *she refused to be comforted.* Here was discontent. When we let any creature lie too near our heart, when God pulls away that comfort, a piece of our Heart is rent away with it. Too much fondness ends in frowardness. Those that would be content in the want of mercy, must be moderate in the enjoyment. *Jonathan* dipt the rod in Honey, he did not trust in it. Let us take heed of ingulphing our selves in pleasure; better have a spare diet, than by having too much, to surfeit.

*Ps. 62.20.

SECT.

SECT. VI.

6. Rule. *Get much of Heaven into your Heart.*

SPiritual things satisfie; the more of Heaven is in us, the less Earth will content. He that hath once tasted the love of God, his thirst is much quenched towards sublunary things; the joys of Gods Spirit are heart-filling and heart-chearing joys; he that hath these, hath Heaven begun in him, *Rom.* 14. 17. and shall we not be content to be in Heaven? Oh get a sublime heart, *Seek the things that are above* *; flie aloft in your affections, thirst after the graces and comforts of the Spirit: the Eagle that flies above in the air, fears not the stinging of the Serpent; the Serpent creeps on his belly, and stings only such creatures as go upon the earth.

* Col. 3. 1.

Discontent is a serpent that stings only an earthly heart, an heavenly soul that with the Eagle flies aloft, finds abundantly enough in God to give contentment, and is not stung with the cares and disquiets of the world.

SECT.

SECT. VII.

7. Rule. *Look not so much on the dark side of your condition, as on the light.*

GOD doth chequer his providences, white and black, as the pillar of cloud had its light side and dark; look on the light side of thy estate; who looks on the backside of a landskip? Suppose thou art cast in a Law-suit, there is the *dark-side*; yet thou hast some land left, there is the *light side*. Thou hast sickness in thy body, there is the *dark side*; but grace in thy soul, there is the *light side*. Thou hast a child taken away, there is the *dark side*; thy husband lives, there is the *light side*. Gods Providences in this life are various, represented by those speckled Horses among the Myrtle-trees, which were * the *red* and *white*; mercies and afflictions are interwoven; God doth speckle his work. Oh, saith one, I want such a comfort; but weigh all thy mercies in the ballance, and that will make thee content. If a man did want a finger, would he be so

*Zach. 1. 8.

ſo diſcontented for the loſs of that, as not to be thankful for all the other parts and joints of the body? Look on the *light ſide* of your condition, and then all your diſcontents will eaſily disband; do not pore upon your loſſes, but ponder upon your mercies. What! wouldſt thou have no croſs at all? Why ſhould one man think to have all good things, when himſelf is good but in part? wouldſt thou have no evil about thee, who haſt ſo much evil in thee? thou art not fully ſanctified in this life, how then thinkeſt thou to be fully ſatisfied? never look for perfection of contentment till there be perfection of Grace.

SECT. VIII.

8. Rule. *Conſider in what a poſture we ſtand here in the World.*

1. WE are in a *military* condition, we are Souldiers *; now a Souldier is content with any thing: what though he hath not his ſtately Houſe: his rich furniture, his ſoft bed, his full table,

* 2 Tim. 2. 3.

table, yet he doth not complain; he can lie in ſtraw as well as down; he minds not his lodging; but his thoughts run upon dividing the ſpoil, and the Garland of Honour that ſhall be ſet upon his Head, and for hope of this, is content to run any hazard, endure any hardſhip. Were it not abſurd to hear him complain that he wants ſuch proviſion, and is fain to lie out in the fields? a Chriſtian is a *military perſon*, he fights the Lords battels, he is Chriſts Enſign-bearer. Now what though he endures hard fare, and the Bullets flie about? he fights for a Crown, and therefore muſt be content.

2. We are in a *peregrine condition*, Pilgrims and Travellers: A man that is in a ſtrange Countrey is contented with any diet or uſage, he is glad of any thing, though he hath not that reſpect or attendance as he looks for at home; nor is capable of the priviledges and immunities of that place, he is content; he knows when he comes into his own Countrey he hath lands to inherit, and there he ſhall have honour and reſpect: So it is with a child of God, he is in a pilgrim-condition, *I am a ſtranger with thee, and a ſojourner,*

as

*all my Fathers were**. Therefore let a Christian be content: he is in the world, but not of the world; he is born of God, and is a Citizen of the new Jerusalem*, therefore, though *he hunger and thirst, and have no certain dwelling-place**, yet he must be content; it will be better when he comes into his own Countrey.

*Ps.39.12.

* Heb. 12. 10.

* 1 Cor.4. 11.

3. We are in a *mendicant condition*; we are beggars, we beg at Heaven-gate, *Give us this day our daily bread*; we live upon Gods alms, therefore must be content with any thing; a beggar must not pick and chuse, he is contented with the refuse. Oh, why dost thou murmur thou art a beggar, and art fed out of the alms basket of Gods Providence?

SECT. IX.

9. Rule. *Let not your hopes depend* extrinsecè *upon these outward things.*

LEan not upon sandy pillars; we oft build our comforts upon such a friend, or estate, and when that prop is removed, all our joy is gone, and our

our hearts begin either to *fail* or *fret*. A lame man leans on his crutches, and if they *break* he is undone; let not thy contentment go upon crutches which may soon fail; the ground of contentment, signifies self-sufficiency; a Christian hath that from within that is able to support him, that strength of faith and *good hope through grace*, as bears up his Heart in the deficiency of outward comforts. The Philosophers of old, when their estates were gone, yet could take contentment in the goods of the mind, their learning and virtue; and shall not a believer much more in the grace of the Spirit, that rich enamel and embroidery of the soul? Say with thy self, If friends leave me, if riches take wings, yet I have that within comforts me, *viz.* a heavenly treasure, *Omnia mea mecum porto*; when the blossoms of my estate are blown off, still there is the sap of contentment in the root, my Heart; I have still an interest in God, and that interest cannot be broken off. Oh never place your felicity in these dull and beggarly things here below.

SECT.

SECT. X.

10. Rule. *Let us often compare our condition.*

QUeſt. *How ſhall I compare?*

Anſw. Make this five-fold comparison.

1. Let us compare our condition and our deſert together; if we have not what we deſire, we have more than we deſerve. For our *mercies*, we have deſerved *leſs*, for our afflictions, we have deſerved *more*. 1. *Comparison.*

Firſt, in regard of our *mercies*, we have deſerved leſs. What can we deſerve: *Can man be profitable to the Almighty*? we live upon free grace. *Alexander* gave a great gift to one of his ſubjects; the man being much taken with it, This (ſaith he) is more than I am worthy of; I do not give thee this, ſaith the King, becauſe thou art worthy of it, but I give a gift like *Alexander*. Whatever we have is not *merit*, but *bounty*; the leaſt bit of bread is more than God owes us; we can bring faggots to our own burning, but not one flower

flower to the Garland of our salvation; he that hath the least mercy will die in Gods debt.

Secondly, in regard of our *afflictions*, we have deserved more. *Thou hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve**. Is our condition sad? we have deserved it should be worse: hath God taken away our estate from us? he might have taken away Christ from us: hath he thrown us into Prison? he might have thrown us into Hell; he might as well damn us, as whip us; this should make us contented.

* Ezra 9. 13.

2. *Comparison.*

2. Let us compare our condition with others; and this will make us content; we look at them who are above us; let us look at them who are below us*; we see one in his silks, another in his sack-cloath; one hath the waters of a full cup wrung out to him, another is mingling his drink with tears; how many pale faces do we behold, whom not sickness, but want, hath brought into a consumption! think of this, and be content. 'Tis worse with them, who perhaps deserve better than we, and are higher in Gods favour. Am I in prison? was not *Daniel* in a worse place, *viz.* The Lyons

* *Dum tibi aliena pericula memoras, mitius portes tua.* Isid. Soliloq. 1.

Lyons Den? Do I live in a mean cottage? Look on them who are banished from their Houses. We read of the primitive Saints, *that they wandred up and down in Sheep-skins and Goat-skins, of whom the world was not worthy* *. Hast thou a gentle fit of an Ague? look on them who are tormented with the Stone and Gout, *&c.* others of Gods children have had greater afflictions, and have born them better than we. *Daniel* fed upon pulse, and drank water, yet was fairer than they who ate of the Kings portion *; some Christians who have been in a lower condition, that have fed upon pulse and water, have looked better; *viz.* been more patient and contented than we who enjoy abundance. Do others rejoice in affliction, and do we repine? Can they take up their Cross and walk cheerfully under it, and do we under a lighter Cross murmur?

* Heb. 11. 27.

* Dan. 1. 15.

3. Let us compare our condition with Christs upon Earth; what a poor, mean condition was he pleased to be in for us? he was contented with any thing. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; that though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor* *. He could

* 2 Cor. 8. 9.

could have brought down an house from Heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth; but he was contented to be in the *wine-press*, that we might be in the *wine-cellar*; and to live poor, that we might die rich; the manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy; he, who is now preparing mansions for us in Heaven, had none for himself on Earth, *he had no where to lay his head.* Christ came in *Formâ pauperis*; who *being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant* *. We read not of any sums of money he had; when he wanted money, he was fain to work a miracle for it *. Jesus Christ was in a low condition; he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the Cross, and that was his humility; he was content to live poor, and dye cursed. Oh compare your condition with Christs.

* Phil. 2. 7.

* Mat. 17. 27.

4. *Comparison.* 4. Let us compare our condition with what it was once, and this will make us content.

First, Let us compare our *spiritual estate* with what it was once. What were we when we lay in our blood? we were heirs apparent to hell, having no right to pluck one leaf from the tree

tree of the promise; it was a *Christless* and *hopeless* condition, *Ephes.* 2. 12. but now God hath cut off the entail of hell and damnation; he hath taken you out of the wild Olive of nature, and engraffed you into Christ; making you living branches of that living Vine; he hath not only caused the light to shine *upon* you, but *into* you*, and hath interested you in all the priviledges of son-ship, is not here that may make the soul content? Eph. 2. 12. * 2 Cor. 4. 6.

Secondly, Let us compare our *temporal estate* with what it was once: alas, we had nothing when we stepped out of the womb; *For we brought nothing with us into the world** ; if we have not that which we desire, we have more than we did bring with us; we brought nothing with us (*but sin*) other creatures bring something with them into the world; the Lamb brings wool, the silk-worm silk, *&c.* but we brought nothing with us. What if our condition at present be low? it is better than it was once; therefore having food and rayment, let us be content; whatever we have, Gods providence fetcht it in to us; and if we lose all, yet we have as much as we brought with us. This * 1 Tim. 6. 7.

was that that made *Job* content, *Naked came I out of my Mothers womb* *, as if he had said, though God hath taken away all from me, yet why should I murmur? I am as rich now as I was when I came into the world, I have as much left as I brought with me: naked came I hither: therefore blessed be the name of the Lord.

* Job 1. 21.

5. *Comparison.*

5. Let us compare our condition with what it shall be shortly. There is a time shortly coming, when if we had all the riches of *India*, they would do us no good; we must dye, and can carry nothing with us, so saith the Apostle, *It is certain we can carry nothing out of the world* *; therefore it follows, *having food and rayment let us be therewith content*, Ver. 8. Open the rich mans grave, and see what is there; you may find the *Misers* bones, but not his riches: were we to live for ever here, or could we carry our riches into another world, then indeed we might be discontented, when we look upon our empty bags: but it is not so: God may presently seal a warrant for death to apprehend us; and when we dye we cannot carry our estate with us. Honour and riches descend not into the grave, why then are we

* 1 Tim. 5. 7.

Vetera frangantur sepulchra, ossa divitum agnoscas non opes. Bede.

we troubled at our outward condition? why do we disguise our selves with discontent? Oh lay up a stock of grace, be rich in faith and good works, these *riches will follow us* *; no other coyn but Grace will pass current in Heaven, silver and gold will not go there; labour to *be rich towards God*; and as for other things, be not solicitous, *we shall carry nothing with us* *.

* Rev. 14. 13.

* Luke 12. 21.

SECT. XI.

11. Rule. *Do not bring your condition to your mind, but bring your mind to your condition.*

THe way for a Christian to be contented, is not by raising his estate higher, but by bringing his spirit lower: not by making his Barns wider, but his Heart narrower *; one man a whole Lordship or Mannor will not content; another is satisfied with a few acres of land; what is the difference? the one studies to satisfie curiosity, the other necessity; the one thinks what he may *have*, the other thinks what he may *spare*.

* *Non qui parum habet, sed qui plus cupit, pauper est.* Laert. Diog.

* *Si vis esse Dives (inquit Pithocles) non ex pecuniæ adjiciendum, sed cupiditatibus detrahendum.* Chrysost.

* πλούσιος γὰρ οὐκ ὁ πολλῶν χρημάτων κεκτημένος, ἀλλ' ὁ μηδενὸς χρείαν ἔχων περιβεβλημένος.

SECT. XII.

12. Rule. *Study the vanity of the Creature.*

IT matters not whether we have more or less of these things, they have vanity written upon the frontispiece of them; the world is like a *shadow that declineth*: it is delightful, but deceitful; it promiseth more than we find; and it fails us when we have most need of it *. All the world rings changes, and is constant only in its disappointments: what then if we have less of that which is at best but voluble and fluid? The world is as full of *mutation* as *motion*; and what if God cuts us short in sublunaries? The more a man hath to do with the world, the more he hath to do with vanity. The world may be compared to Ice, which is smooth, but slippery; or to the *Ægyptian* Temples, without very beautiful and sumptuous, but within nothing to be seen but the Image of an Ape: every creature saith concerning satisfaction, *It is not in me.* The world is not a filling,

* *O quantum est in rebus inane.*

ling, but a flying comfort. 'Tis like a game at Tennis: Providence bandies her Golden balls, first to one, and then to another. Why are we discontented at the loss of these things, but because we expect that from them which is not, and repose that in them which we ought not; *Jonah was exceeding glad of the Gourd**, what a vanity was it? is it much to see a withering Gourd smitten? or to see the Moon dressing it self in a new shape and figure?

* Jon. 4. 6. *Quid est omnis humani mundi voluptas, aut non viventis hedera quæ textili sylva per parietem insepit, lætamque supra caput umbram explicat? paravit Deus vermem & percussit hederam & exaruit; ita prorsus hederæ nostræ subito marcescunt simulque cum illis omne illud umbratile gaudium.* Drexel. de Æter. p. 163.

SECT. XIII.

13. Rule. *Get fancy regulated.*

IT is the fancy which raiseth the price of things above their real worth; what is the reason one Tulip is worth five pounds, another perhaps not worth one shilling; fancy raiseth the price; the difference is rather imaginary than real: so why it should be

better to have thousands than hundreds, is, because men fancy it so; if we could fancy a lower condition better *, as having less care in it, and less account, it would be far more eligible; the water that springs out of the Rock, drinks as sweet, as if it came out of a Golden Chalice *; things are as we fancy them. Ever since the fall, the fancy is distempered; *God saw that the imagination of the thoughts of his heart were evil* *. Fancy looks through wrong spectacles; pray that God will sanctifie your fancy, a lower condition would content, if the mind and fancy were set aright. *Diogenes* preferred his Cynical life before *Alexanders* royalty: he fansied his little cloyster best. *Fabricius*, a poor man, yet despised the gold of King *Pyrrhus*.

* *Status hominis efficax virtutis gymnasium.* Archesilaus.

* *Dulcis prosiliens aqua sive è petra fluens, sive in poculo, sive ex mandibulo asini, ad restinguendum situm sufficit: Panis subcinericius, mel agreste possunt te sortem reddere æque ac cibus splendidissimus.* Hyperius.

* Gen. 6. 5.

——— *Contentus honesto*
Fabricius parvo, spernebat munera Regum.
Sudabatque gravi Consul Serranus aratro.
Claud. l. 1.

Could

Could we cure a distempered fancy, we might soon conquer a discontented heart.

SECT. XIV.

14. Rule. *Consider how little will suffice nature.*

THe body is but of small continent, and is easily recruited. Christ hath taught us to pray *for our daily bread*; *Parva seges satis est*, Nature is content with a little: μὴ διψᾶν, μὴ πεινᾶν, not to thirst, nor to starve is enough, saith *Gregory Nazianzen*; meat and drink is a Christians riches, saith St. *Hierom*; and the Apostle saith, *Having food and rayment, let us be content.*

* *Cibus & potus sunt divitiæ Christianorum.*

——O prodiga rerum
Luxuries, nunquam parvo contenta paratu!
Et quæsitorum pelago, terraque ciborum
Ambitiosa Fames, & lautæ gloria mensæ!
Discite quam parvo liceat producere vitam,
Et quantum natura petit——

Lucan. l. 4. *Pharsal.*

The ſtomach is ſooner fill'd than the eye: How quickly would a man be content, if he would ſtudy rather to ſatisfie his *hunger* than his *humour*!

SECT. XV.

15. Rule. *Believe the preſent Condition is beſt for us.*

FLeſh and blood is not a competent Judge. Surfeited ſtomachs are for banquetting ſtuff; but a man that regards his health, is rather for ſolid food. Vain men fancy ſuch a condition beſt, and would flouriſh in their bravery, whereas a wiſe Chriſtian hath his will melted into Gods will, and thinks it beſt to be at his finding: God is wiſe; he knows whether we need Food or Phyſick; and if we could acquieſce in providence, the quarrel would ſoon be at an end. Oh what a ſtrange creature would man be, if he were what he could wiſh himſelf! Be content to be at Gods allowance, God knows which is the fitteſt paſture to put his ſheep in: Sometimes a more barren ground doth well, whereas rank

rank pasture may rot. Do I meet with such a cross? God shews me what the world is: he hath no better way to wean me, than by putting me to a stepmother. Doth God stint me in my allowance? he is now dieting me. Do I meet with loss? it is, that God may keep *me* from being lost. Every cross wind shall at last blow me to the right port. Did we believe that condition best which God doth parcel out to us, we should cheerfully submit and say, *The lines are fallen in pleasant places.*

SECT. XVI.

16. Rule. *Do not too much indulge the flesh.*

WE have taken an oath in Baptism to *forsake the flesh*. The flesh is a worse enemy than the Devil; it is a *bosom traytor*: an enemy within is worst. If there were no Devil to tempt, the flesh would be another *Eve*, to tempt to the *forbidden fruit*. Oh take heed of giving way to it; whence is all our discontent, but from the fleshly part? The flesh puts us upon the immode-

immoderate purſuit of the World; it conſults for eaſe and plenty, and if it be not ſatisfied, then diſcontents begin to ariſe. Oh, let it not have the reins; martyr the fleſh; in ſpiritual things the fleſh is a *ſluggard*; in ſecular things an *Horſleech*, crying, Give, give. The fleſh is an enemy to ſuffering*, it will ſooner make man a *Courtier* than a *Martyr*. Oh keep it under, put its neck under Chriſts yoke, ſtretch and nail it to his Croſs; never let a Chriſtian look for *contentment* in his ſpirit, till there be *confinement* in his fleſh.

* *Non durum eſt quod patimur, ſed mollis ſumus.* Sen.

SECT. XVII.

17. Rule. *Meditate much on the glory which ſhall be revealed.*

THere are great things laid up in Heaven: Though it be ſad for the preſent, yet let us be content in that it will ſhortly be better; it is but a while, and we ſhall be with Chriſt bathing our ſouls in the fountain of his love; we ſhall never complain of wants or injuries any more; our croſs may be heavy, but one ſight of Chriſt will make

make us forget all our former sorrows. There are two things should give contentment:

1. That God will make us able to bear our troubles *. God (saith *Chrysostom*) doth like a Lutanist, who will not let the strings of his Lute be too slack, lest it spoil the musick; nor will he suffer them to be too hard stretched or scrued up, lest they break: So doth God deal with us: he will not let us have too much prosperity, lest this spoyl the musick of prayer and repentance; nor yet too much adversity, lest the spirit *fail before me*, and the souls *which he hath made* *. * 1 Cor. 10. 13. *Chrys.* * Is. 57. 16.

2. When we have suffered a *while* *, we shall be perfected in glory; the Cross shall be our ladder by which we shall climb up to Heaven. Be then content, and the scene will alter. God will e're long turn our water into wine; the hope of this is enough to drive away all distempers from *the Heart*. Blessed be God, it will be better: *We have no continuing City here* *, therefore our afflictions cannot continue. A wise man looks still to the end: *The end of the just man is peace* *. Methinks the smoothness of the end should make amends * 1 Pet. 5. 1. * Heb. 13. * Ps. 37. 37.

amends for the ruggedness of the way. O eternity, eternity! think often of the *Kingdom prepared.* *David* was advanced from the field to the Throne. First, he held his *Shepherds staff*, and shortly after the *Royal Scepter.* Gods people may be put to hard services here; but God hath chosen them to be *Kings* to sit upon the throne with the Lord Jesus. This being weighed in the ballance of Faith, would be an excellent means to bring the Heart to Contentment.

SECT. XVIII.

18. Rule. *Be much in Prayer.*

THe last Rule for contentment, is, *Be much in Prayer.* Beg of God, that he will work our Hearts to this blessed frame, *Is any man afflicted? let him pray* *: So, is any man discontented? let him pray, Prayer gives vent. The opening of a vein lets out the bad blood: When the heart is filled with sorrow and disquiet, prayer lets out the bad blood. The key of prayer oyled with tears *, unlocks the Heart of

* Ja. 5. 13.

* *Expletur lachrymis, egeritur que dolor.*

all its discontents. Prayer is an holy bell or charm to drive away trouble; Prayer is the unbosoming of the soul; the unloading of all our cares in Gods breast, and this ushers in sweet contentment. When there is any burden upon our spirits, by opening our mind to a friend, we find our Heart finely eased and quieted; It is not our *strong resolutions*, but our *strong requests* to God, which must give the heart ease in trouble; by Prayer the strength of Christ is brought into the soul; and where that is, a man is able to go through any condition. *Paul* could be in every state content: but that you may not think he was able to do this of himself; he tells you, that though he could want and abound, and πάντα ποιῶν, *do all things**, yet it was *through Christ strengthening him*, Phil. 4. 13. 'Tis the child that writes, but it is the Scrivener guides his hand. St. *Paul* arrived at the hardest duty in Religion, *viz. Contentment*; but the spirit was his *Pilot*, and Christ his *strength*, and this strength was ushered in by holy prayer.

* Ἀλλ' ἐπειδὴ μεγαλη-γορία τὸ πρᾶγμα ἵν' ὅρα πῶς ἐπιλαμβάνεται, τα-χέως πάντα ἰσχύω ἐν τῷ ἐνδυναμοῦντί με Χριστῷ, οὐκ ἐμὸν τὸ κατόρθωμα, ἀλλὰ τοῦ τὴν ἰσχὺν δεδωκότος θεοῦ. Chrysost.

prayer. Prayer is a powerful Orator. Prayer is an *Orator* with God, and an *exorcist* against sin. The best way is to pray down discontent. What *Luther* saith of *concupiscence*, I may say of *Discontent*; prayer is a sacred Leech, * to suck out the venome and swelling of this passion. Prayer composeth the Heart, and brings it into tune. Hath God deprived you of many Comforts? bless God that he left you the spirit of Prayer.

* *Oratio est hirudo animæ.*

Use 6. Consolation.

Use 6. The last use is of comfort, or an encouraging word to the contented Christian. If there be an Heaven upon Earth, thou hast it. O Christian, thou mayst insult over thy troubles, and with the *Leviathan* laugh at the shaking of a spear, *Job* 41. 29. What shall I say? thou art a crown to thy profession; thou dost hold it out to all the world, that there's virtue enough in Religion to give the soul contentment. Thou shewest height of grace. When grace is *crowning*, it is not so much for us to be content; but when grace is *conflicting*, and meets with crosses, tentations, agonies; now to be content, this is a glorious thing indeed.

Job 41.29.

To

To a contented Christian I shall say two things for a farewel.

First, God is exceedingly taken with such a frame of Heart. God saith of a contented Christian, as *David* once said of *Goliahs* sword, *there is none like that, Give it me*, 1 Sam. 21. 9. If you would please God, and be *men of his Heart*, be contented. It is said that *Rebecca* made *Isaac* savoury meat, such as her Husband loved; would you give God *such a dish as he loves*, bring him this of Contentment. The Musician hath many lessons to play; but he hath one above all the rest: There are many lessons of holy Musick that delight God; the lesson of repentance, humility, *&c.* But this lesson of Contentment is the sweetest lesson that a Believer can play, God hates a froward spirit.

Secondly, the contented Christian shall be no loser. What lost *Job* by his patience? God gave him three times as much as he had before. What lost *Abraham* by his Contentment, he was content to leave his Country at Gods call, the Lord makes a covenant with him, that he would be *his God*, Gen. 17. He changeth his name;

no

no more *Abram*, but *Abraham*, the Father of many Nations. God makes his seed as the Stars of Heaven; nay, Honours him with this Title, * *The Father of the faithful.* The Lord makes known his secrets to him, *Shall I hide from* Abraham *the thing that I will do?* God settles a rich inheritance upon him, that land which was a type of Heaven, and afterwards translated him into the blessed Paradise. God will be sure to reward the contented Christian. As our Saviour said in another case to *Nathanael, Because I said I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.* So I say, Art thou contented (O Christian) with a little? thou shalt see greater things than these; God will distil the sweet influences of his love into thy soul; he will raise thee up friends; he will bless the oyl in the cruse; and when that is done, he will crown thee with an eternal enjoyment of himself; he will give thee Heaven, where thou shalt have as much contentment as thy soul can possibly thirst after.

* Gen. 18. 17.

Joh. 1. 50.

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